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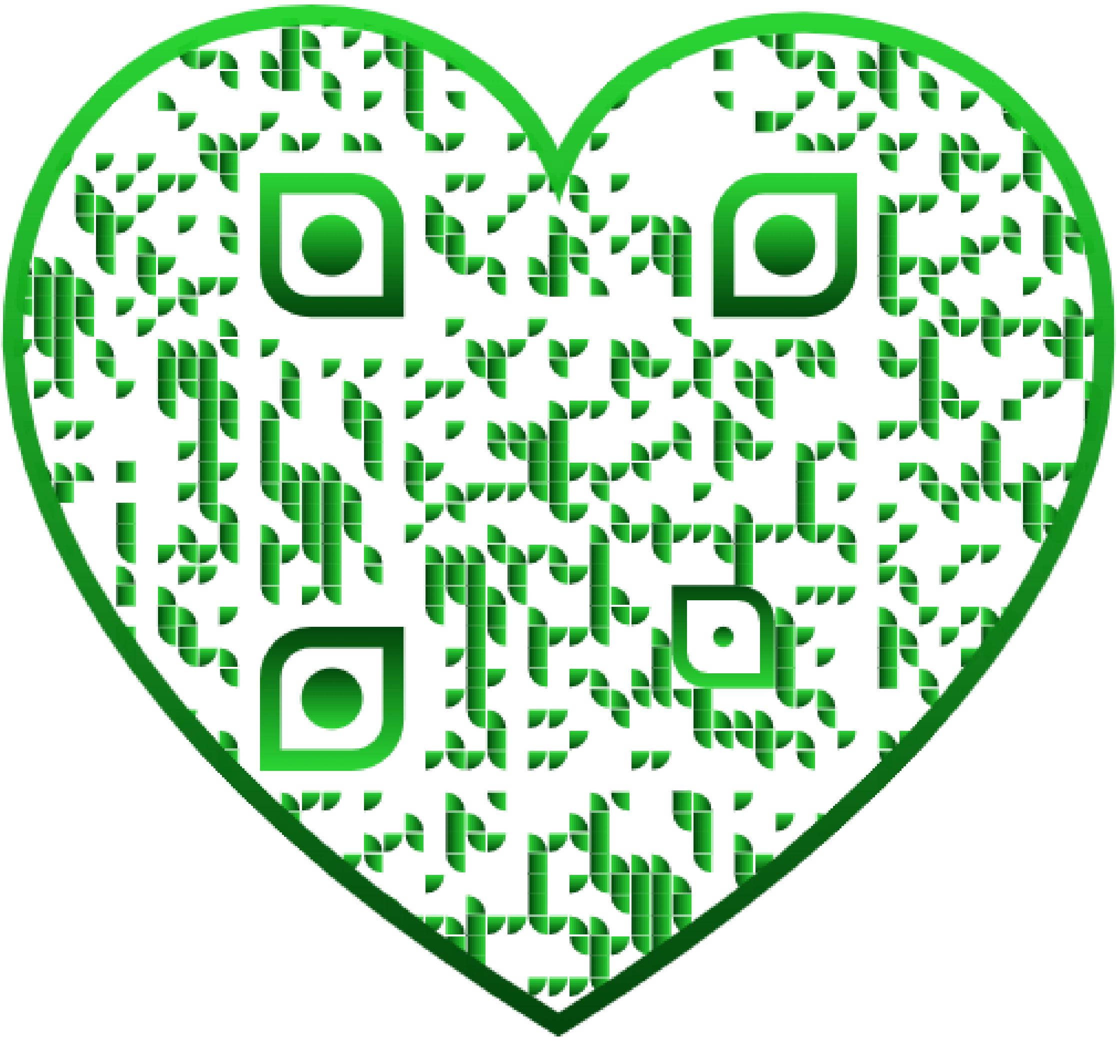

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jonathan.gordon@futurenet.com
Art Editor **Kym Winters**
Features Editor **Callum McKelvie**
Staff Writer **Emily Staniforth**
Production Editor **Iain Noble**
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Edoardo Albert, Wayne Bartlett, Michael E Haskew,
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JANE
AUSTEN
1775
250
2025

Ancient History's LOST CITIES

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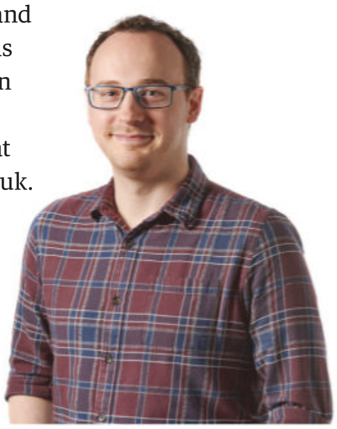
Bath celebrated Austen this year with floral displays around the city

Welcome

The United Kingdom boasts an impressive heritage of great writers. From the Brontës to Blyton and from Tolkien to Pratchett, we're fortunate to have some incredible storytellers emerge from these isles. In terms of popularity and cultural influence, there are a handful who dominate and Jane Austen is one of the most significant. From the number of adaptations of her work to the continued interest in Regency romance tales, Austen's impact and legacy is difficult to measure. We've previously explored the lives and cultural surroundings of Dickens and Shakespeare, so it seems only right to me that we should do the same for Jane Austen, especially as we mark her 250th birthday.

So that's exactly what we've done with our cover feature, delving into the Georgian events and fashions that influenced Austen's most famous works. This issue we also bring you some dark tales of Christmas past, learn about some amazing Japanese empresses, track history's biggest toy crazes and offer some gift ideas for history lovers. In fact, we have even more suggestions at historyanswers.co.uk. I hope you enjoy those and the rest of the issue.



Jonathan Gordon
Editor

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CONTENTS

ISSUE 163

26
Jane Austen's England
Inspirations behind one of the nation's greatest authors

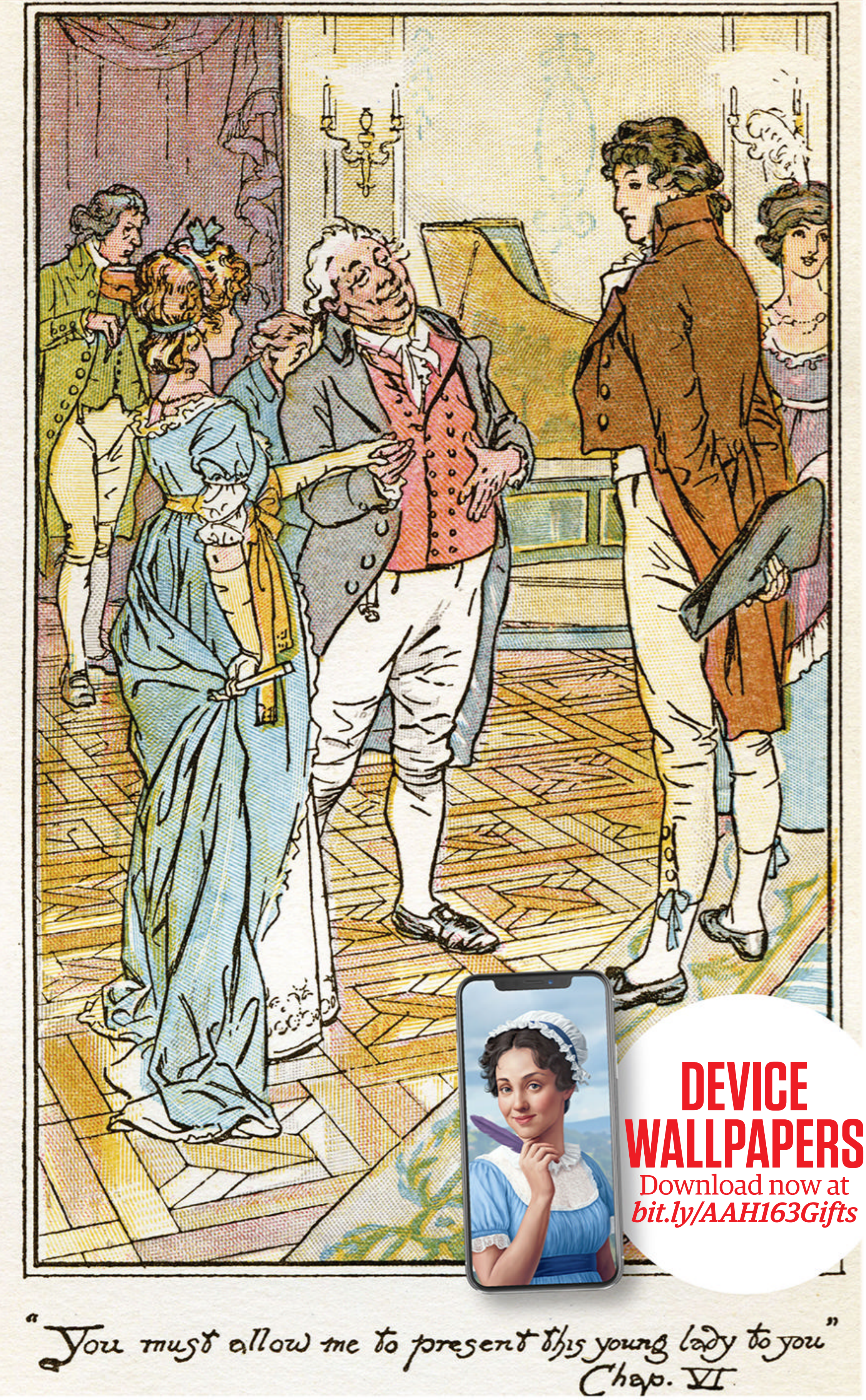
36
Biggest Toy Crazes
The child's playthings that made history

42
Founder of the Persian Empire
How Cyrus the Great forged a mighty ancient power

46
Jingle Hell
Tales from the darker side of Yuletide

52
Empresses of Japan
Eight female rulers who broke with convention

58
Quests for the Holy Grail
Who really has the legendary Cup of Christ?


"You must allow me to present this young lady to you"
Chap. VI

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ALL ABOUT…

12 **Key Events**
Timeline of spices

14 **Inside History**
A Portuguese Nau

16 **Anatomy**
Bahri Mamluk spice merchant

17 **Historical Treasures**
Spice tower

18 **Hall Of Fame**
Spice enthusiasts

20 **Q&A**
Roger Crowley on why spices were so valued in history

22 **Places To Explore**
Historic spice markets

ALL ABOUT HISTORY
JANE AUSTEN'S ENGLAND

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REGULARS

06 **Defining Moments**
Photos with amazing stories

64 **Greatest Battles**
A clash of Gulf War armoured forces at 73 Easting

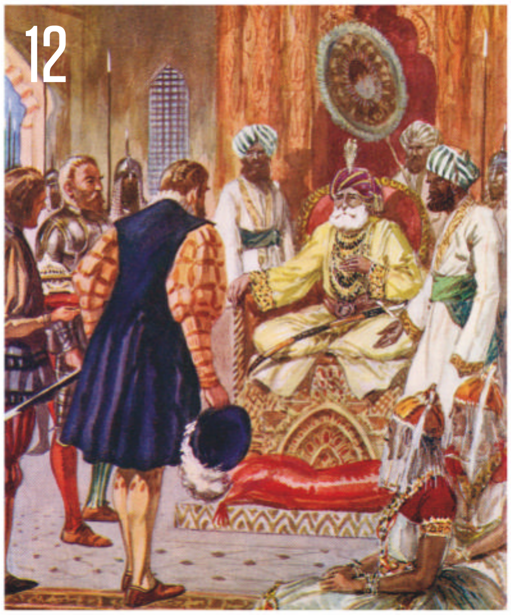
70 **What If**
Anne Boleyn had given birth to a son?

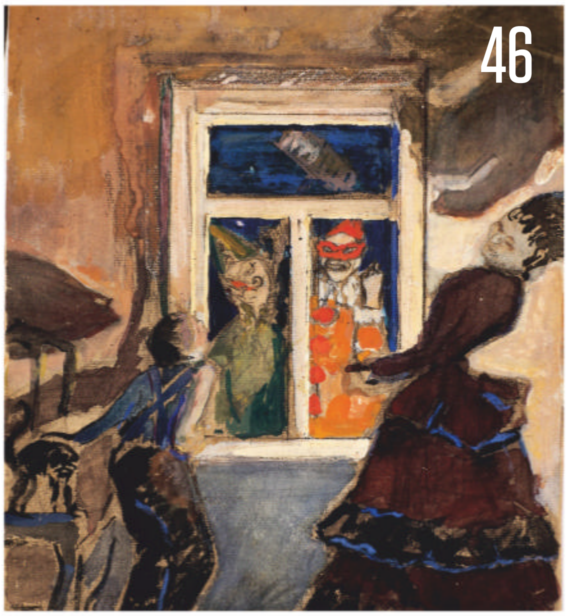
74 **Through History**
Marie Antoinette: fashion icon

78 **Reviews**
Our verdict on the latest historical books and media

81 **History Vs Hollywood**
Is *The Hurricane* blowing hot air?

82 **Recipe**
How to make lemon syllabub





Defining Moments

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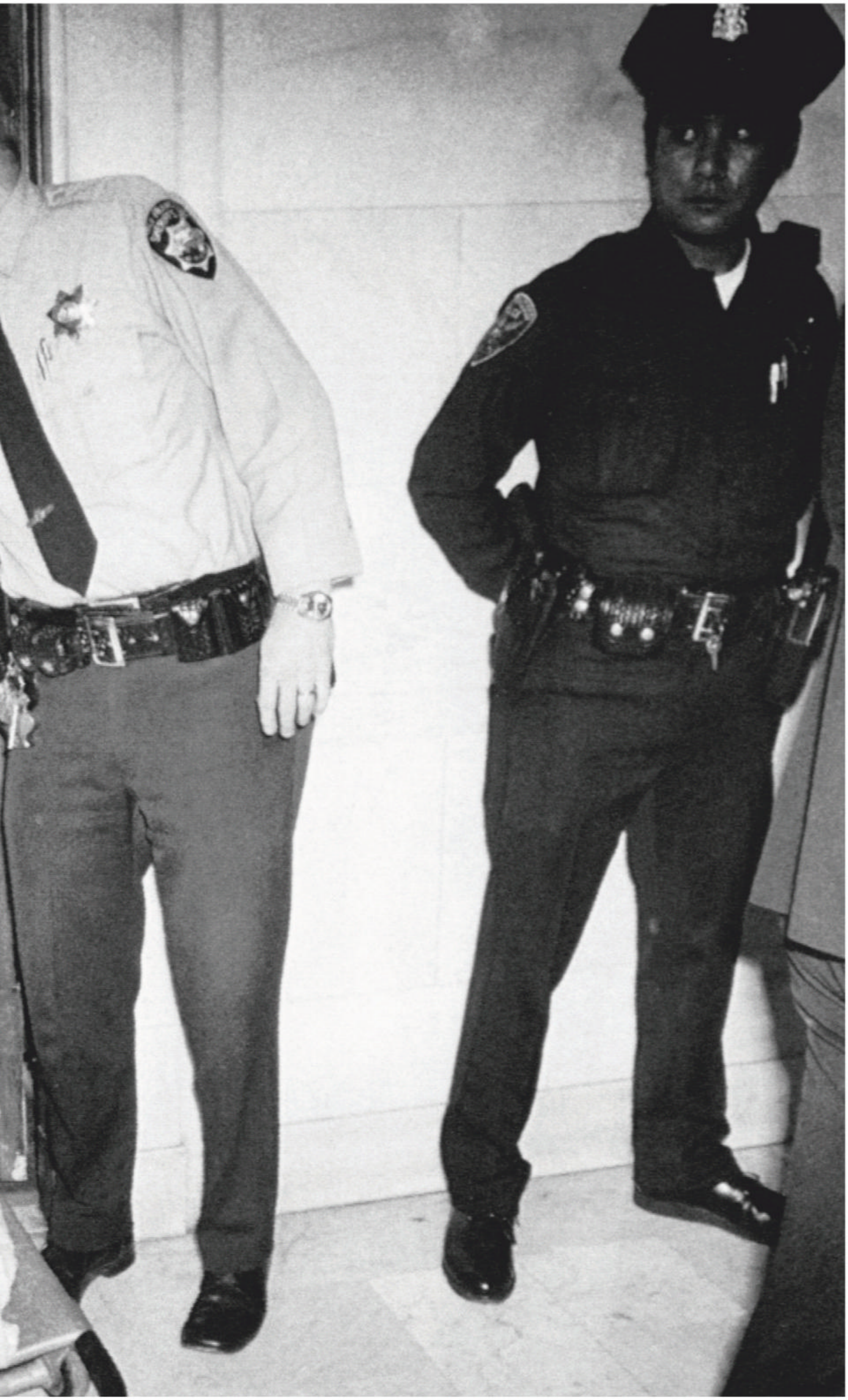

27 November 1978

HARVEY MILK ASSASSINATED

Politician Harvey Milk was one of the first openly gay elected officials in America. A staunch LGBTQ+ activist, he was a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1978 when he and Mayor George Moscone were shot by fellow politician Dan White in San Francisco's City Hall. In this photograph, Milk's body is pictured being removed from the building. At White's trial the following year he was convicted of voluntary manslaughter, sparking the White Night Riots in which the LGBTQ+ community took to the streets of San Francisco in response to the lenient sentencing.

2 December 1983

MICHAEL JACKSON'S *THRILLER* PREMIERES

The most famous and influential music video of all time, *Thriller* debuted on MTV on 2 December 1983, just over a year after the *Thriller* album had been released. Michael Jackson's sixth studio album was critically acclaimed and gave him his first number one in the album charts. The 14-minute music video was directed by John Landis and sees Jackson and a fictional girlfriend on a date, where they are swarmed by zombies on a dark street. Jackson also becomes a zombie and performs a dance routine that remains iconic to this day.

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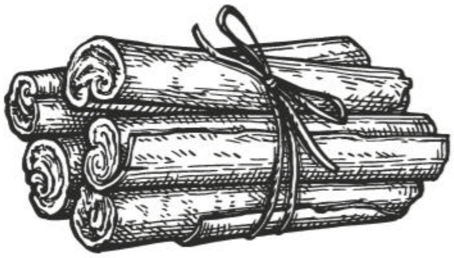
ALL ABOUT SPICES



Discover how these simple ingredients and commodities played a role in empires and important social customs

14 INSIDE A PORTUGUESE NAU

16 ANATOMY OF A BAHRI MAMLUK SPICE MERCHANT

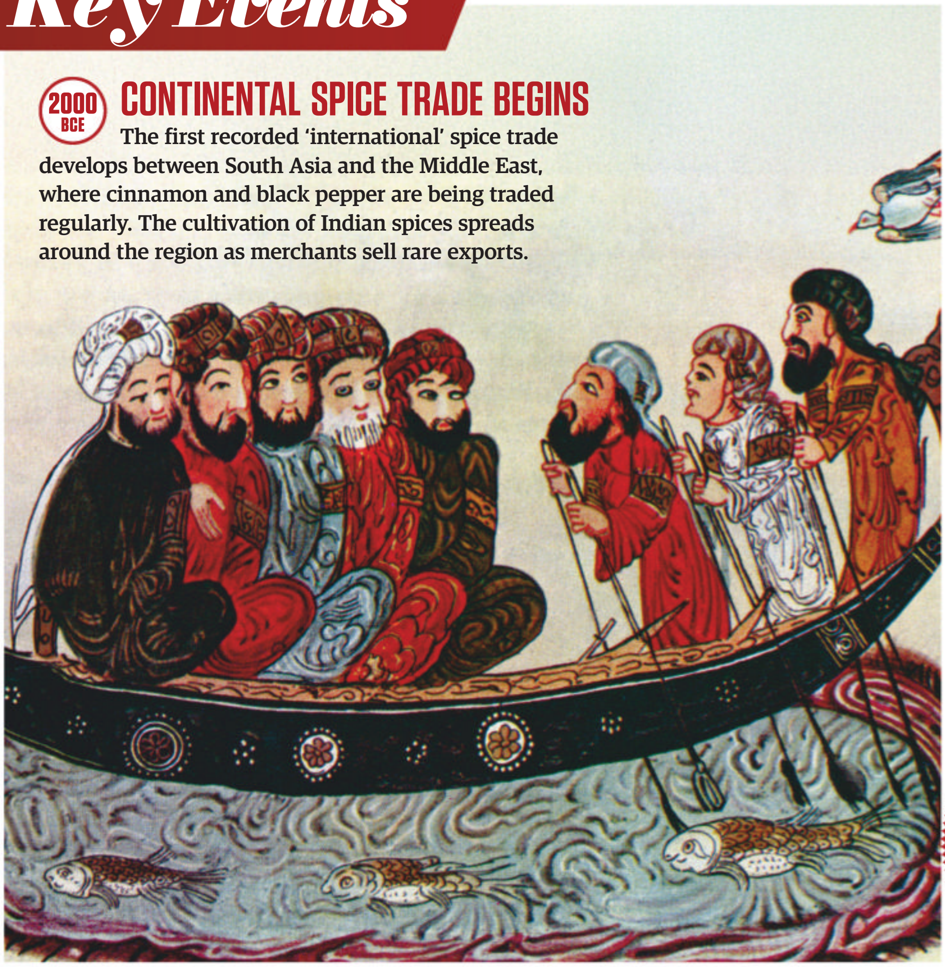
18 TEN INFLUENTIAL SPICE ENTHUSIASTS

20 WHY WERE SPICES SO IMPORTANT?

Main image: © Adobe stock

Written by Emily Staniforth, Callum McKelvie, Curtis Hewison

Key Events

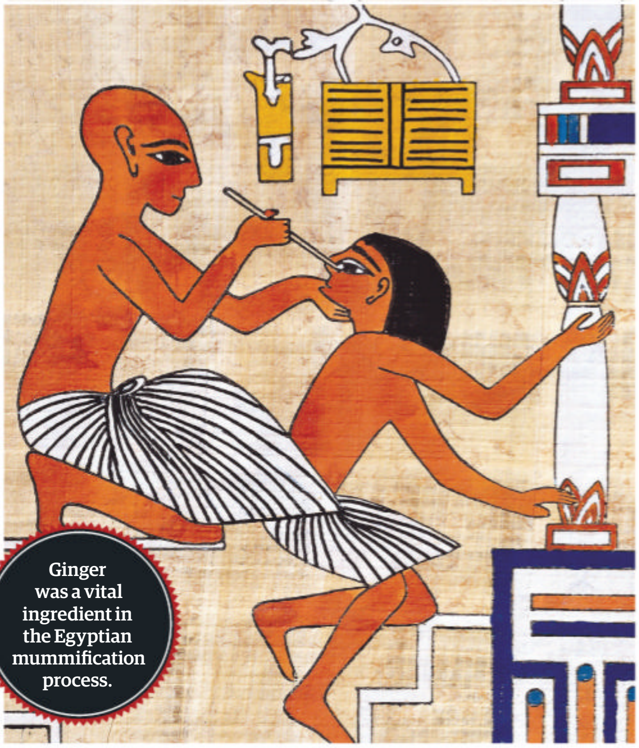


2000 BCE CONTINENTAL SPICE TRADE BEGINS

The first recorded 'international' spice trade develops between South Asia and the Middle East, where cinnamon and black pepper are being traded regularly. The cultivation of Indian spices spreads around the region as merchants sell rare exports.

1550 BCE EGYPTIANS USE SPICES AS MEDICINE

Buried between the legs of a mummy, the *Papyrus Ebers* show the use of herbs and spices, particularly onion and garlic, in ancient Egyptian medicine. The record includes 842 treatments and recipes for treating all kinds of ailments, including depression and dementia.



Ginger was a vital ingredient in the Egyptian mummification process.

EARLY HUMANS DISCOVER FLAVOURINGS c.50,000 BCE

Possibly seeking to protect food from ash while cooking, early humans discover that wrapping food in leaves also flavours it.

AUSTRONESIAN MARITIME TRADE BEGINS 1500 BCE

The first maritime spice trade develops between South Asia and the island nations of Southeast Asia, trade and migration that will define the coming centuries

CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE SILK ROAD 330 CE

Capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, Constantinople rises as a centre of trade between East and West. Nutmeg and cloves are first introduced to Europe through its gates.

2000 BCE

1550 BCE

45 BCE

CHILLIS CULTIVATED IN MESOAMERICA 4000 BCE

Fossil records show the earliest evidence of chilli peppers in Mesoamerica for cooking foods like maize, beans and squash.

MYTHICAL TALES OF ARABIAN SPICES 77 CE

Pliny the Elder challenges Arab myths of spice sources as lies to increase their cost to Roman customers. 'Cinnamon birds' and burning 'peppercorn snakes' are discredited.

GINGER IN THE CHINESE NAVY 406 CE

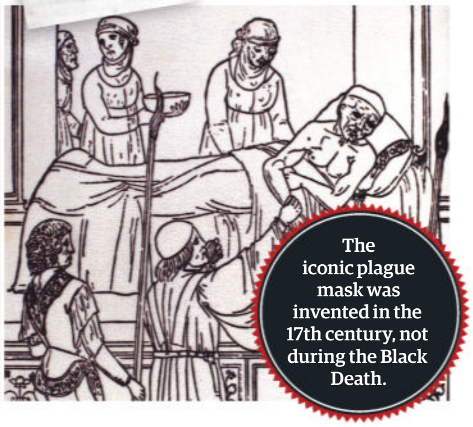
Ginger is cultivated in pots in Eastern Jin China. The spice is regularly supplied to Chinese ship crews and consumed to prevent scurvy.

45 BCE SPICE POPULARISED TO EXTINCTION

Silphium, a rare plant, is prized as a spice, status symbol and medicine. Its popularity in Rome drives destructive over-farming on the North African coast, the first such extinction on record. It survives only in literature and on coinage.

1348 SPICES ATTEMPTED AS PLAGUE CURES

The Black Death is ravaging Eurasia and in desperation people turn to combinations of spices and oils to protect themselves against the disease. They believe the plague is spread through miasma and that blocking the 'bad air' through other smells will offer protection.



The iconic plague mask was invented in the 17th century, not during the Black Death.

KFC's 11 Herbs & Spices recipe was never trademarked as this would require publication of the ingredients.

1940 SECRET SPICE MIX PERFECTED

Harland 'Colonel' Sanders in Corbin, Kentucky, completes his Original Recipe for frying chicken using 11 herbs and spices said to 'stand on everybody's shelf'. He will transform his gas station into a global brand using this recipe. The spice mix is shipped premade to preserve its secret recipe from competitors.

SPICE ESSENCE DISTILLED 1000

The Persian scholar Ibn Sina successfully distils the essence of flowers and spices for the first time, using them in medicine.

1348 1453 1602 1940

COLUMBUS SAILS FOR ASIA 1492

Christopher Columbus sets sail aboard the Santa Maria in search of a westward route to Asia. Seeking spices, he unwittingly finds a new continent.

PORTUGUESE ROUND CAPE OF GOOD HOPE 1497

Vasco da Gama discovers a sea route between Europe and Asia that avoids the Mediterranean. Portugal monopolises the spice trade and establishes an African coastal empire to maintain its access.

BRITISH MERCHANTS REACH INDIA 1608

A collection of London merchants' ships reach the Indian port of Surat, seeking spices. Their success is the first endeavour of the East India Company.

BOSTON TEA PARTY CHANGES TASTES 1773

As American anti-British sentiment and tariffs both rise, drinking tea is seen as unpatriotic and colonists turn to alternative beverages, including spearmint leaves and sassafras bark.

HOTTEST RECORDED CHILLI PEPPER 2023

Chilli breeder Ed Currie sets the world record for the hottest chilli pepper, Pepper X, supplanting his own previous creation the Carolina Reaper.

1453 THE OTTOMANS CAPTURE CONSTANTINOPLE

Mehmed the Conqueror, leader of the Ottoman Empire, takes Constantinople, the nexus of the spice trade's land routes between Asia and Europe. The resulting monopoly managed by Venice and Ottoman traders pushes Europeans to seek other routes to the spice trade.

1602 DUTCH VOC'S VIOLENT MONOPOLY

The United East India Company (VOC) becomes the biggest European venture in the Asian spice trade, taking over modern-day Jakarta and the Banda Islands through force. The company establishes a monopoly on nutmeg and mace that lasts for two centuries.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images, © Shutterstock

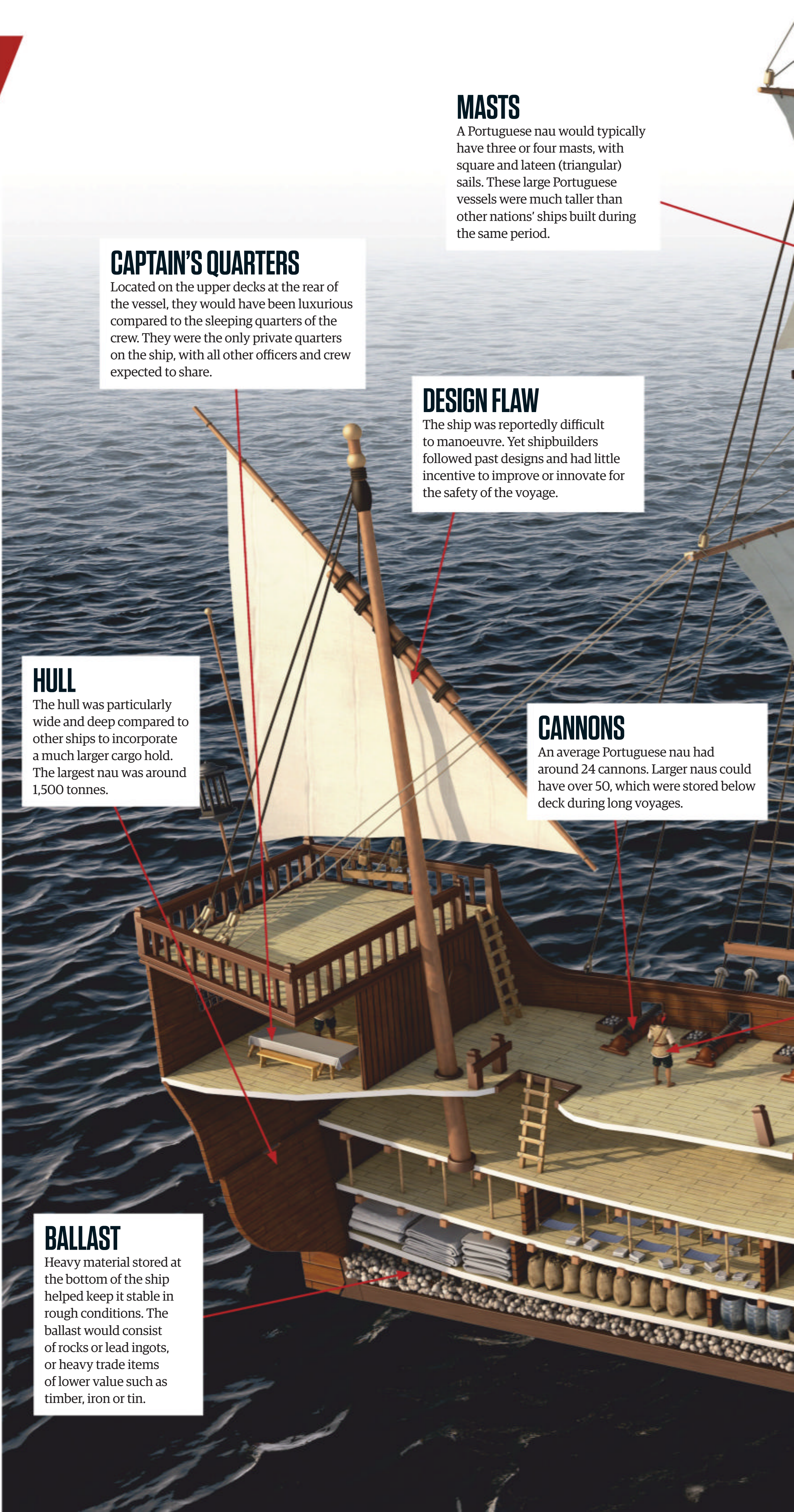
PORTUGUESE NAU

Portugal
14th - 16th century

In 1498, the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama reached the shores of India. His voyage opened up a previously unknown maritime route via the Cape of Good Hope and began a new chapter in the spice trade. Over the following centuries this route allowed Portugal to trade directly with the spice merchants of Asia in territories such as India, China and the Spice Islands. Until the 17th century, when their dominance of the African route was challenged by the Netherlands, Portuguese merchant ships known as naus (called carracks in other countries) made the long voyage, their hulls laden with spices.

The nau was specifically designed with these long voyages in mind and their hulls were much wider and larger than previous ships to allow for the added cargo. This also proved useful when carrying supplies for the voyages, which were far longer than any undertaken in previous centuries. Over the years the naus grew in size, with some having four masts instead of three.

The ship was eventually superseded by the galleon, which drew on the former's design but was much more heavily armed and was used primarily as a warship. The galleon's cargo capacity never quite reached that of the nau and they continued to be used for some time afterward. It was an important vessel that helped start the Age of Exploration and further the global spice trade.



MASTS
A Portuguese nau would typically have three or four masts, with square and lateen (triangular) sails. These large Portuguese vessels were much taller than other nations' ships built during the same period.

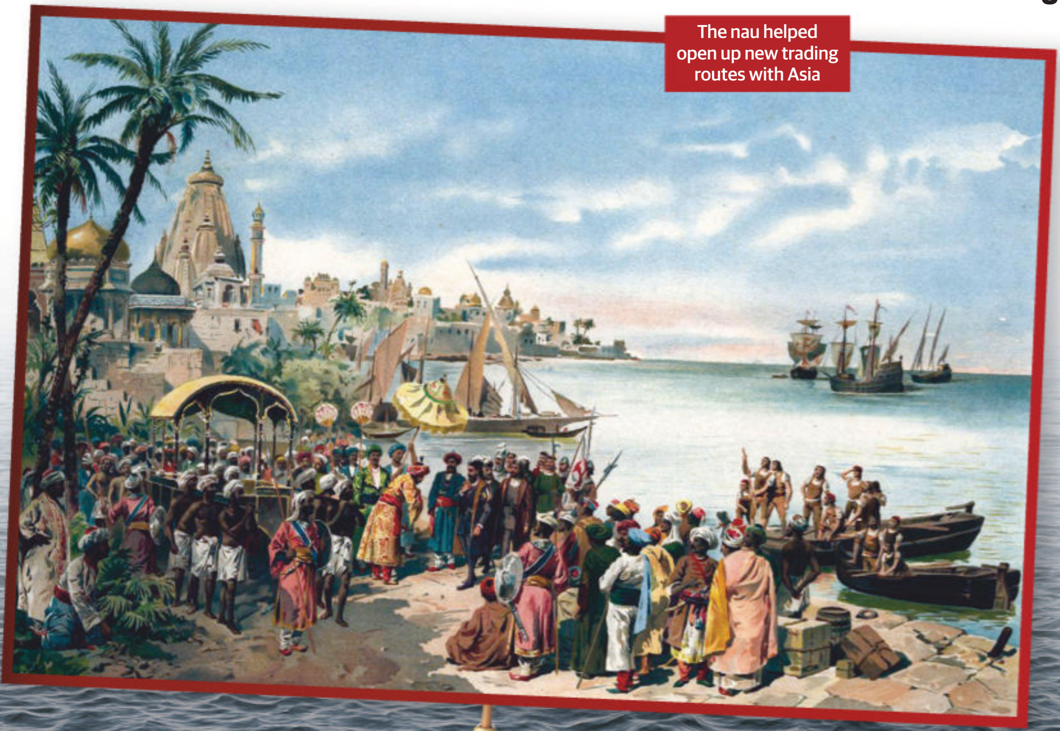
CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS
Located on the upper decks at the rear of the vessel, they would have been luxurious compared to the sleeping quarters of the crew. They were the only private quarters on the ship, with all other officers and crew expected to share.

DESIGN FLAW
The ship was reportedly difficult to manoeuvre. Yet shipbuilders followed past designs and had little incentive to improve or innovate for the safety of the voyage.

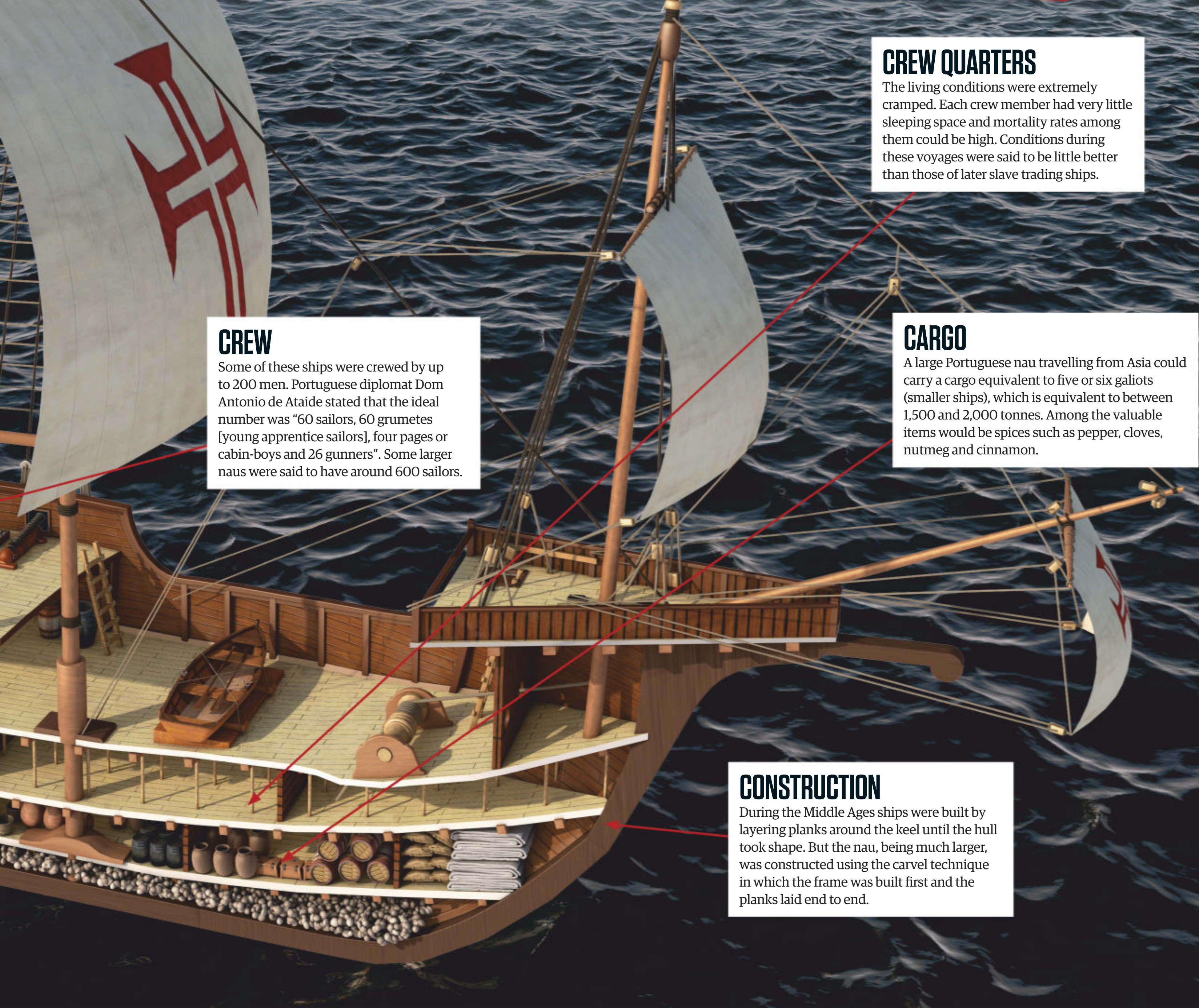
HULL
The hull was particularly wide and deep compared to other ships to incorporate a much larger cargo hold. The largest nau was around 1,500 tonnes.

CANNONS
An average Portuguese nau had around 24 cannons. Larger naus could have over 50, which were stored below deck during long voyages.

BALLAST
Heavy material stored at the bottom of the ship helped keep it stable in rough conditions. The ballast would consist of rocks or lead ingots, or heavy trade items of lower value such as timber, iron or tin.



The nau helped open up new trading routes with Asia



CREW QUARTERS

The living conditions were extremely cramped. Each crew member had very little sleeping space and mortality rates among them could be high. Conditions during these voyages were said to be little better than those of later slave trading ships.

CREW

Some of these ships were crewed by up to 200 men. Portuguese diplomat Dom Antonio de Ataide stated that the ideal number was "60 sailors, 60 grumetes [young apprentice sailors], four pages or cabin-boys and 26 gunners". Some larger naus were said to have around 600 sailors.

CARGO

A large Portuguese nau travelling from Asia could carry a cargo equivalent to five or six galiots (smaller ships), which is equivalent to between 1,500 and 2,000 tonnes. Among the valuable items would be spices such as pepper, cloves, nutmeg and cinnamon.

CONSTRUCTION

During the Middle Ages ships were built by layering planks around the keel until the hull took shape. But the nau, being much larger, was constructed using the carvel technique in which the frame was built first and the planks laid end to end.

Illustration by: Adrian Mann
Inset: © Alamy

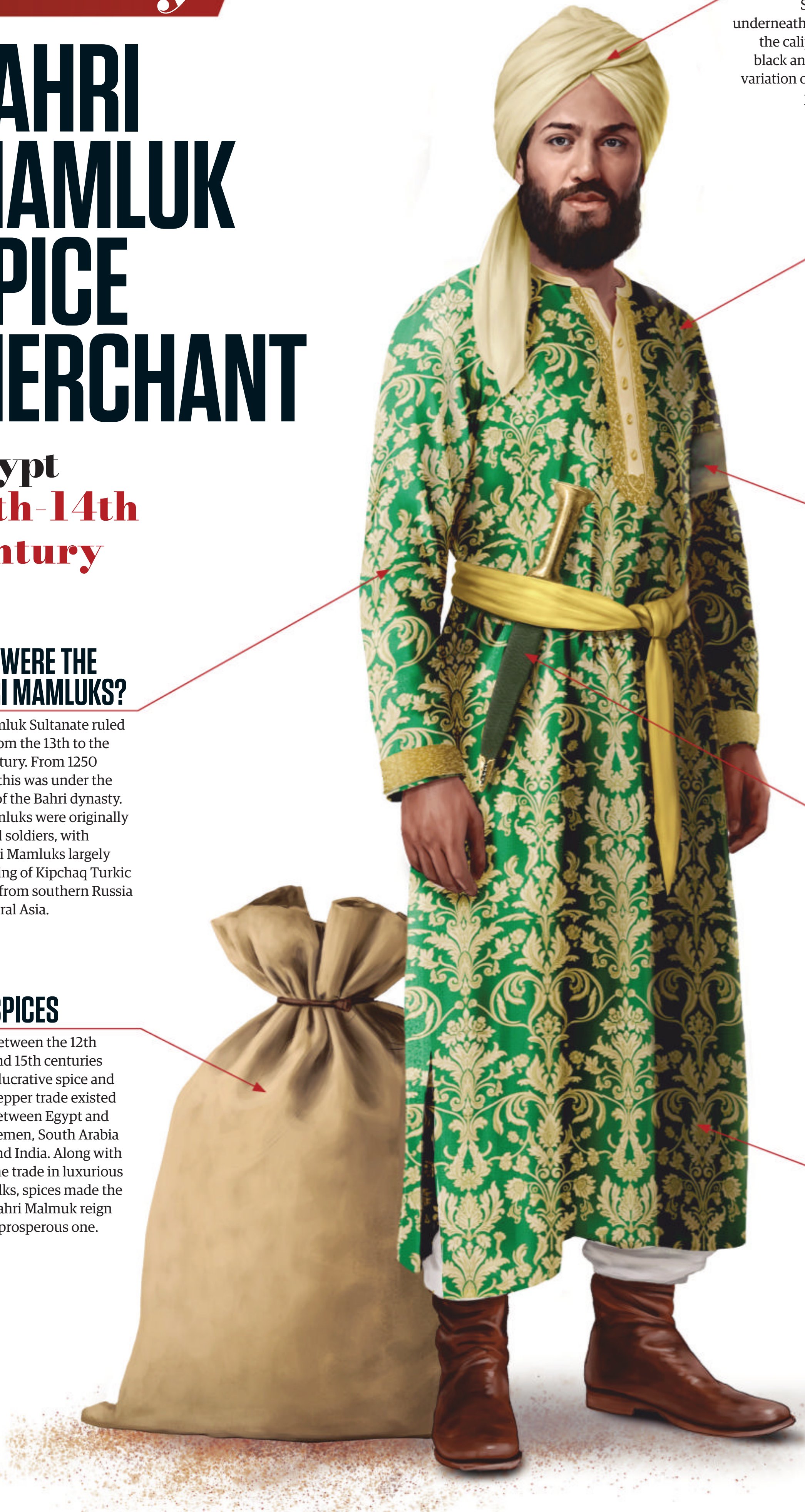
Anatomy

BAHRI MAMLUK SPICE MERCHANT

Egypt 13th-14th century

WHO WERE THE BAHRI MAMLUKS?

The Mamluk Sultanate ruled Egypt from the 13th to the 16th century. From 1250 to 1382, this was under the control of the Bahri dynasty. The Mamluks were originally enslaved soldiers, with the Bahri Mamluks largely comprising of Kipchaq Turkic peoples from southern Russia and central Asia.



TURBAN

Some form of cap was usually worn underneath the turban. Large turbans worn by the caliph, sultans, judges and clergy were black and denoted status. A smaller, lighter variation of a turban known as a tahfif gained popularity during the 15th century.

FARAJIYA

The farajiya was worn by members of the middle class and the elite. Similar to an Islamic jubba, it was made from brightly coloured silks and had long wide sleeves.

TIRAZ

Tiraz were embroidered hand-crafted silks worn as armbands to denote an individual's status. Tiraz would often include the date, the caliphate ruler's name and a prayer.

DAGGER

Members of the elite merchant class likely wore a dagger on their belts as a symbol of status. Depending on how wealthy the merchant was, these daggers were often opulently decorated. The Bahri Malmuks soon became known for their curved blades, which are thought to have developed after contact with the Mongol peoples.

SPICES

Between the 12th and 15th centuries a lucrative spice and pepper trade existed between Egypt and Yemen, South Arabia and India. Along with the trade in luxurious silks, spices made the Bahri Malmuk reign a prosperous one.

FINE FABRIC

Textiles were highly important to the Bahri Mamluk trade alongside lucrative spices and silks. They were particularly influential on European designs and were highly admired items among international merchants. The Mamluk rulers and elites were also generous patrons to artists throughout their kingdom.

Illustration: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

SPICE TOWER

This beautiful silver tower is one of many crafted for use during the Jewish ritual of Havdalah

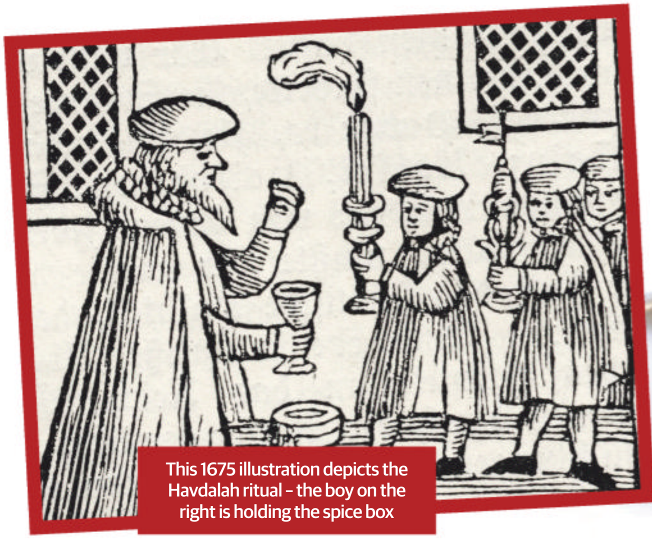
C.1800 - 1900

While we might immediately think of spices as ingredients used to add flavour to our diet, throughout history and around the world they continue to serve many other purposes. One of these has been in religious and spiritual ceremonies such as the Jewish ritual of Havdalah, which ends the Shabbat. The ceremony involves wine, a candle and – of course – fragrant spices. Throughout the centuries many beautiful spice boxes or spice towers have been made for this ritual.

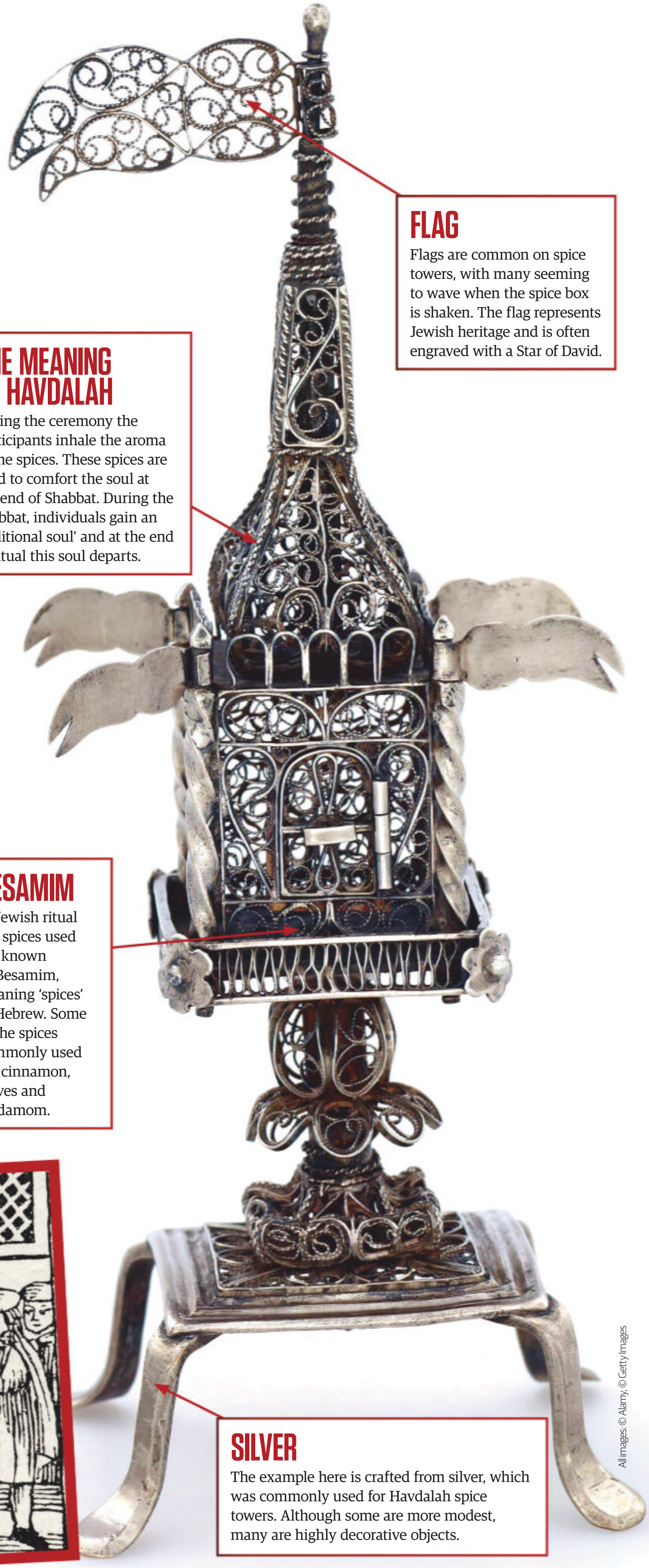
The Havdalah ceremony incorporates numerous senses. During the ritual, the participants light the candle, bless the wine and smell the perfume of the spices. As you can see, the example here is in the shape of a tower. Other historical examples can be found in a variety of shapes, with the tower originating at some point during the 16th century. Rabbi Shubert Spero suggests that to the medieval Jew the tower represented “both a military fortress with its suggestions of strength and security” and a “magnificent religious edifice built by men to honour their deity”, both of which he says “reflected rights and conditions which the Jew in that period did not possess.”

Despite the fact that there is no specific requirement for the spice container to be any shape, the tower gained popularity, particularly in Europe of the 18th century. Many originated from the now semi-autonomous area of Galicia, which from 1772 onwards was under the rule of the Habsburg Empire. By 1857 the Jewish population of Galicia numbered 449,000 – nearly 10 percent of the population. However, examples originate from across the globe, including eight from the town of Schwäbisch Gmünd in Germany, which at the time was famed for its craftsmanship.

Examples of similar towers can be found in the collections of museums around the world, including the Yeshiva University Museum and the Jewish Museum in New York, The Jewish Museum London and the Jewish Museum Berlin, as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.



This 1675 illustration depicts the Havdalah ritual – the boy on the right is holding the spice box



FLAG

Flags are common on spice towers, with many seeming to wave when the spice box is shaken. The flag represents Jewish heritage and is often engraved with a Star of David.

THE MEANING OF HAVDALAH

During the ceremony the participants inhale the aroma of the spices. These spices are used to comfort the soul at the end of Shabbat. During the Shabbat, individuals gain an ‘additional soul’ and at the end of ritual this soul departs.

BESAMIM

In Jewish ritual the spices used are known as Besamim, meaning ‘spices’ in Hebrew. Some of the spices commonly used are cinnamon, cloves and cardamom.

SILVER

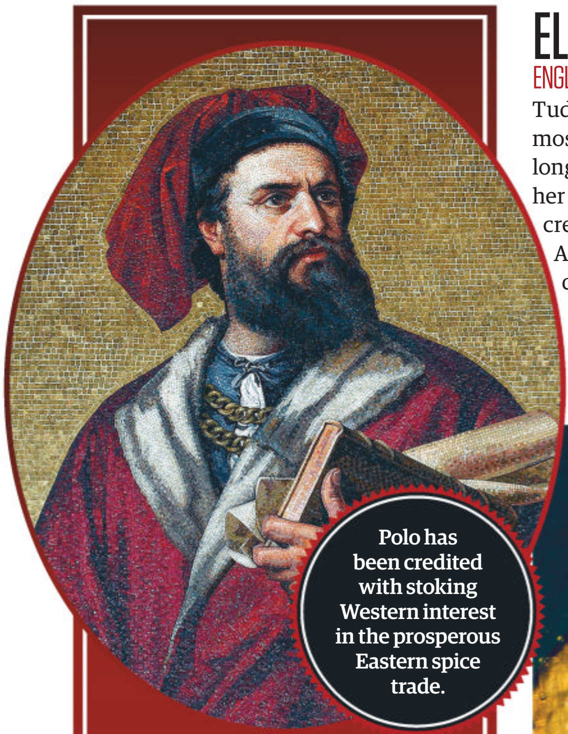
The example here is crafted from silver, which was commonly used for Havdalah spice towers. Although some are more modest, many are highly decorative objects.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

Hall of Fame

SPICE ENTHUSIASTS

Meet some of the greatest ancient and medieval spice lovers



Polo has been credited with stoking Western interest in the prosperous Eastern spice trade.

Marco Polo

Venetian

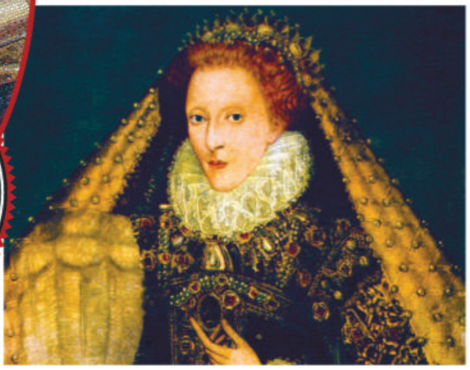
1254 – 1324

Venetian explorer Marco Polo set out in 1271 to travel through Asia and along the famous Silk Road, returning to Venice in 1295. On his journey, which he recorded in detail, he encountered the many expensive spices being traded in that part of the world. He noted in particular the vast amount of pepper (4,500kg a day) that was being brought into the eastern Chinese city of Hangchow (now Hangzhou) and the wealth of cinnamon, pepper and ginger on the Malabar Coast of India. Polo also brought some spices back to Europe from his travels.

ELIZABETH I

ENGLISH, 1533 – 1603

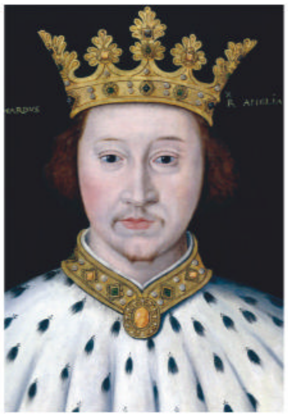
Tudor Queen Elizabeth I is one of England's most famous monarchs and she had a long-lasting impact on history. Among her many notable achievements, she is credited with inventing gingerbread men. At the time, gingerbread was a popular delicacy in Europe but it was Elizabeth who first shaped the sweet treat into human form when she asked her cook to make gingerbread in the image of her guests at court.



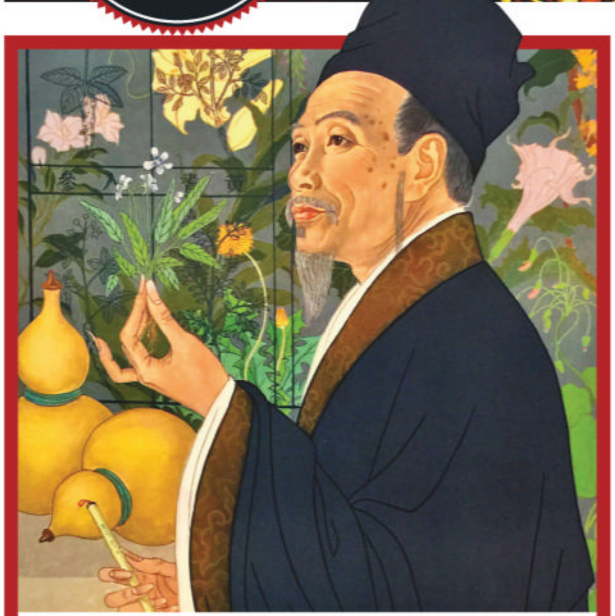
RICHARD II

ENGLISH, 1367 – 1400

A seemingly unlikely fan of spices was medieval English King Richard II. Under his rule, saffron was cultivated in England for the first time, having been brought into the country during the reign of his predecessor Edward III. Saffron was a prized ingredient in the 1390 cookbook of Richard's master cooks, *The Forme of Curry*, which stipulated that increased amounts of saffron should be used in recipes for grand occasions.



Physica, written by Hildegard, is considered a seminal text in Western medicine.



Li Shizhen

Chinese, 1518-93

In 1593, just after his death, Chinese scholar Li Shizhen's *Bencao Gangmu* (*Compendium of Materia Medica*) was published. In the monumental work, Shizhen had compiled information on nearly 1,900 different drugs and over 11,000 prescriptions. Of the remedial ingredients listed, Li Shizhen categorised a vast list of animals, minerals, herbs and plants. He also listed among his ingredients for many medicines and remedies a number of spices from across the world. These included ginseng root, chamomile, pepper and ginger, the properties of which were outlined in relation to their utility in medical treatment.

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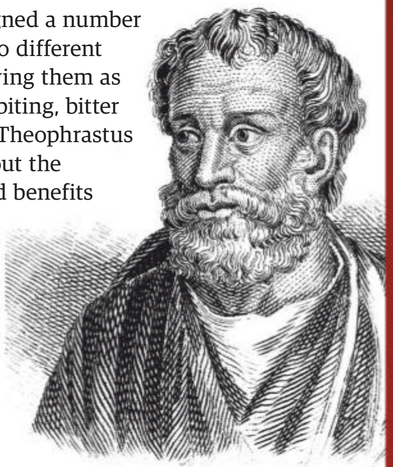
Hildegard of Bingen
German, c.1098 – 1179

Medieval polymath Hildegard of Bingen was a German abbess who, as well as authoring major works of philosophy and theology, compiled writings on natural sciences based on the experience she gained while working in the gardens and infirmaries of convents. In her teachings, Hildegard regarded many spices as effective treatments for the sick and believed spices and herbs were useful in maintaining the health of the mind and body. She believed that nutmeg was helpful for opening the heart, cloves were detoxifying, turmeric enhanced immunity and pepper helped with digestion. Other spices she used included galangal root, liquorice root and cinnamon.

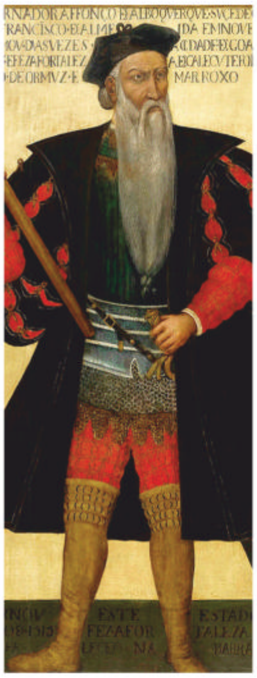
THEOPHRASTUS
GREEK, C.371 – C.287 BCE

Born on the island of Lesbos, Theophrastus was an ancient Greek philosopher who is best remembered for his work in botany. He authored two major works on plants: *Enquiry into Plants* and *Growth of Plants*. In these works he assigned a number of properties to different spices, classifying them as hot, pungent, biting, bitter or astringent. Theophrastus also wrote about the many uses and benefits of spices including cinnamon, ginger, pepper and frankincense.



Hippocrates
Greek, c.460 – c.370 BCE

One of the most important and influential figures in the history of medicine, Hippocrates was a physician who was born on the Greek island of Kos. He studied and wrote about the body and causes of illness while also developing the Hippocratic Oath, a set of ethics that modern doctors still swear to uphold. Hippocrates believed spices were useful in medicine and detailed 400 medical uses for herbs and spices such as saffron, cinnamon and coriander, many of which are still used today to treat ailments from fevers and colds to stomach aches and digestive problems.

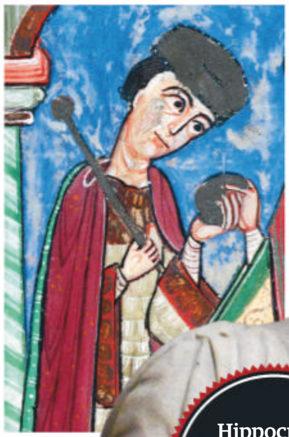


AFONSO DE ALBUQUERQUE
PORTUGUESE, C.1453 – 1515

Afonso de Albuquerque was a Portuguese soldier and conquistador who set out to take control of the spice trade in Asia on behalf of the Portuguese empire. In 1511, Albuquerque and his forces captured Malacca (in modern-day Malaysia) which, at the time, was a major hub of the spice trade and provided access to the 'Spice Islands' of Indonesia. Ultimately, Albuquerque was successful in establishing a strong Portuguese presence in the spice trade.

HENRY VI
GERMAN-DUTCH, 1165-97

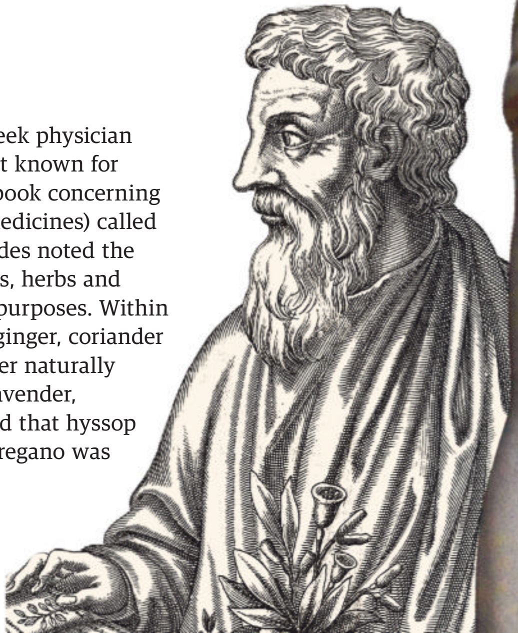
In the ancient and medieval world, spices were seen as luxurious and expensive, particularly within Europe. As such, many influential elite figures coveted them as symbols of wealth and power. On the occasion of his coronation as Holy Roman Emperor in 1191, Henry VI is said to have ordered the streets of Rome to be covered with nutmeg in a show of imperial affluence. The spice was likely used to create a sweet aroma ahead of the ceremony.



Hippocrates has long been considered the 'Father of Medicine'.

DIOSCORIDES
GREEK, C.40 – C.90 CE

Born in Cilicia in Asia Minor, ancient Greek physician and pharmacologist Dioscorides was best known for writing an extensive pharmacopoeia (a book concerning the identification and classification of medicines) called *De materia medica*. In his work, Dioscorides noted the properties of around 600 different plants, herbs and spices that could be used for medicinal purposes. Within this compilation, spices like cinnamon, ginger, coriander and pepper were recorded alongside other naturally occurring ingredients like wormwood, lavender, belladonna and opium. Dioscorides noted that hyssop could be used to treat pneumonia and oregano was an antidote to snake bites.



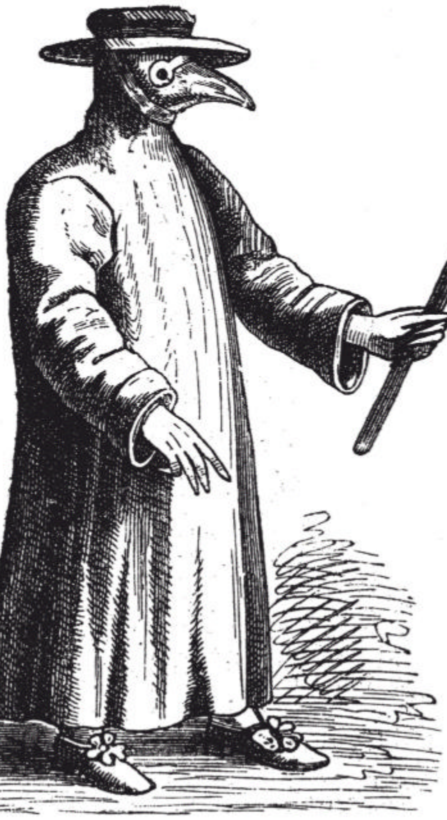
THE VALUE OF SPICES

Roger Crowley explains how spices transformed the world and why they were such a valuable commodity

Roger Crowley is an historian who specialises in maritime and Mediterranean history. He is the author of a number of books on these subjects, including *Empires of the Sea: The Final Battle for the Mediterranean, 1521-1580* and *Constantinople: The Last Great Siege.*

Why were spices so valuable?

It's hard for us now to understand the lure of spices in history. As far back as 5,000 years ago their startling aromas, colours and tastes had a strong hold on the peoples of the past. They conjured up a sense of the exotic, provided glimpses of paradise, suggested potential cures for medical ailments, enriched dull food and inferred a portal to the divine. Because the sources of spices were mysterious and largely unknown, certainly within Europe, they filled a colourful space in the human imagination. Spices were both exotic and expensive because they passed through the hands of many merchants in the trading process. Analogous to the Silk Road, there was an ancient maritime spice route stretching from the Philippines to India, across the Indian Ocean to Arabia, Egypt and the Mediterranean. Spices were the original and ideal global commodity: lightweight, able to profitably fill a ship's hold, reasonably imperishable and high value. With each link in the maritime chain, the price went up, so that by the time pepper reached England the markup could be 1,000 percent. The fact that they were so expensive was, to an extent, a guarantee of their mysterious potency and a status symbol signifier of the end user.



LEFT Plague doctors were said to stuff their masks with spices in order to ward off the disease

What were some of the historical uses of spices?

Spices of course added rich flavours to food. Across the millennia recipes involving spices have been many and various, and cures for everything from stomach ache to the bite of rabid dogs, but throughout history they have also been used in many other ways. In the Chinese Han dynasty, the emperors required courtiers to sweeten their breath with cloves. The Romans held spices to be olfactory channels to the gods – to scent sacrificial offerings and to waft the souls of the dead up into the afterlife on funeral pyres. The Egyptians inserted peppercorns in the nostrils of their embalmed pharaohs, and cardamom into the body cavities. They have had romantic connotations as aphrodisiacs and love potions – they're listed in the *Kama Sutra* as erotic sex aids, while Ovid suggested pepper and stinging nettle seeds. Spices were also cosmetics: Cleopatra bathed in water suffused with saffron – the rarest and most expensive of all spices, which was also used as a dye and a pigment. The Greeks and the Romans listed various spices as analgesics to ward off sickness. Ancient Greek physicians such as Hippocrates systematically categorised and developed their medicinal uses.

In Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries, people carried nosegays and pomanders – bouquets of cinnamon and nutmeg – against the miasma of foul air which was believed to spread illness. Plague doctors similarly stuffed their beaked masks when they made the perilous visits to the afflicted. These herbs featured in a myriad of recipes. Across time, many other qualities have been attributed to spices. They were also intrinsically indicators of wealth and status. Because spices were so expensive they presented a 'blingy' way of showing off in incredibly luxurious banquets.

Can you give an example of a spice used today and historically?

Pepper, one of the commonest of spices today and the most widely traded in the past, features hugely in the literature of remedies over the past few millennia. Hippocrates prescribed it as a cure for tetanus; for hemlock poisoning, as sex aids, to treat infections and joint pains, as well as for thousands of unfamiliar recipes.

What's been the greatest impact of spices on the world?

Even in the 16th century there were some who thought that Europe's obsession with spices was an incomprehensible and costly craze. A Portuguese monk, Gaspar da Cruz, thought them a non-essential luxury – "pepper and ivory which is the principal that the Portuguese do carry, a man may well live without" – but throughout history spices have been a vector of exploration, cultural exchange and the spread of religions. It was Islamic spice merchants traversing the Indian Ocean who spread their religion to the Indian subcontinent. It was the Portuguese, chasing pepper, who created creole cultures – intermarrying with Indian women in Goa. All are fruits of the spice trade. It is this long-distance trade that has shaped the world. Europe's 16th and 17th century voyages in search of the source of spices, exploring and mapping everything they saw, opened up the Pacific Ocean and described the world in which we now live.

Have there been any significant conflicts in history over access to spices?
The 16th and 17th century European voyages witnessed a violent contest between countries for control of the spice trade, fought on the other side of the world. The players in the game were first the Portuguese and the Spanish, then later the Dutch and the English, exporting their rivalries to the spice islands of the Philippines. After [Ferdinand] Magellan's voyage round the world – and discovery of the source of the rarest spices, cloves and nutmegs – Portugal and Spain fought an extraordinary micro-war in these islands, dragging in the hapless local people on one side or the other. By the start of the 17th century the Dutch and the English joined the fray. The battle, which was ruthless, was finally won by the Dutch. It was this near-total monopoly on cloves and nutmeg that powered their golden age. The architecture of Amsterdam, the paintings of Rembrandt and [Johannes] Vermeer, the Ming pottery imported into Europe – all were paid for by the spice trade. It was France's shift to a new cuisine in the 18th century, away from the heavier flavours of an essentially medieval spice-heavy style to more subtle flavours, that heralded the decline of Amsterdam. The 18th century also witnessed the arrival of another cruder and cheaper flavour that reshaped the culinary wars: the mass import of sugar, with all its attendant evils.

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SPICE
The 16th-Century Contest that Shaped the Modern World
ROGER CROWLEY

SPICE: THE 16TH-CENTURY CONTEST THAT SHAPED THE MODERN WORLD IS OUT NOW FROM YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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HISTORIC SPICE MARKETS

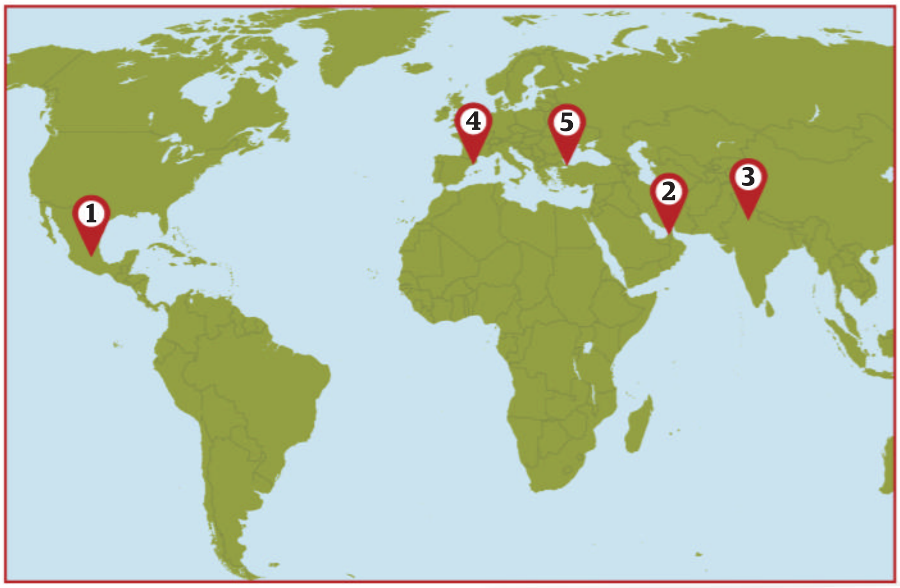
Five of the oldest and most exciting places across the globe to restock your kitchen cupboard

1 MERCADO BENITO JUÁREZ

OAXACA, MEXICO

First opened in 1894, Mercado Benito Juárez is one of the oldest markets in the city of Oaxaca, Mexico. Among the thriving market stalls, visitors will find delicious local spices and a variety of dried chillies (if you can handle the heat!). As with some of the other markets showcased here, spices are not the only delight to be found among the bustling stalls and vendors - the market also specialises in agave worms, which are often sold inside bottles of tequila. They can also be eaten fried and are one of the many delicious treats available.

Perhaps the most famous item to be found among the many spices and street vendors are the Casilda Waters - fruit-flavoured water that has been sold in the market for decades by generations of the same family. A popular example is the almond and rice water infused with prickly pear. Delicious mole sauce and marinade, a traditional Mexican delicacy, can also be found here.



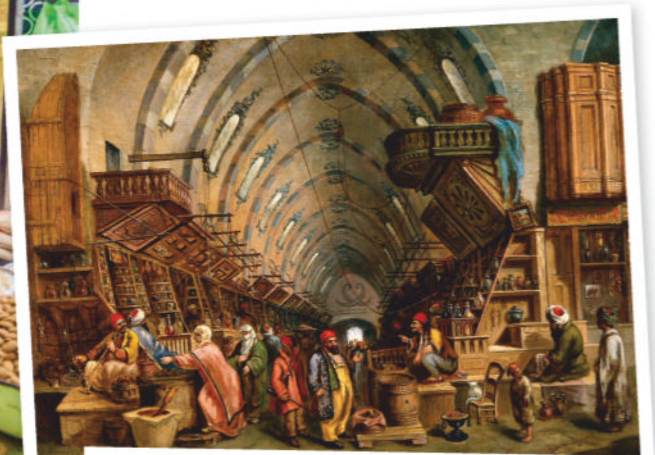
TAJIN
COLORADO
MOLE OAXAQUEÑO ESPECIAL
ESTOFADO
MOLE DE FRUTAS
MOLE DE AJONJOLI

2 DUBAI SPICE SOUK

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

'Souk' means marketplace or bazaar and the Dubai Spice Souk is entirely devoted to the sale of many fragrant spices. The souk was constructed in 1850 after Dubai had already begun to establish itself as an important centre of worldwide commerce, particularly in the trading of spices. To this day, many of the items on sale have global provenance, hailing from Morocco, India and Iran, including saffron and cinnamon.

Among the spices can be found special local blends such as baharat, a Middle Eastern spice blend often used to season meat and fish. Other popular items include a variety of different teas, including the heavily spiced Karak tea. A number of other souks can be visited in nearby Deira, such as the Gold Souk. Over 350 different jewellery shops can be found here, selling exquisite items handcrafted from gold and silver.



3 KHARI BAOLI

DELHI, INDIA

Considered Asia's largest spice market, the Khari Baoli dates back to the 17th century, during India's Moghul period. The first spice market in this area was constructed in 1650 and housed 1,560 shops. This was built by Princess Jahanara Begum, the daughter of Shah Jahan, and was known as the Chandni Chowk, which loosely translates as 'moonlit market'.

The current market takes its name from a stepwell (a kind of well or cistern) which is said to have been constructed a century earlier. The stepwell itself is thought to have survived until at least the 18th century but is now all but vanished, with only a few inscriptions remaining. The heart of the Khari Boali is the Gadodia Market, a large three-storey market building constructed during the 1920s, intended to be both an apartment building and to house the stalls of spice sellers.

Today the market remains a bustling hive of activity where all manner of spices and delicacies are sold. Different varieties of rice, teas and delicious street foods can also be purchased. Some of the shops have historic pedigree, with one of the oldest going back to 1917, while others are thought to date back even further. Chefs from all across India still travel to the market to purchase fresh spices to use in their restaurants.

4 LA BOQUERIA

BARCELONA, SPAIN

La Boqueria is easily Spain's most famous market. The earliest records of stalls selling produce on the site date from 1217, when meat was said to have been sold here. The modern structure was built between 1836 and 1840 after the market became legally recognised in 1826, and it has gone on to become a popular tourist attraction in Barcelona, with thousands of tourists visiting every day.

Unlike some of the other markets featured here, La Boqueria does not specialise solely in spices – its 300 stalls sell a wide variety of foods and supply many of Barcelona's most famous restaurants. A number of restaurants and street food stalls located within the market sell delicacies such as baby squid and olives stuffed with anchovies. Perhaps the most famous restaurant, and certainly one of the most popular, is El Quim – a tapas bar that first opened in 1987 and is famous for its fried baby squid and eggs.

5 THE EGYPTIAN BAZAAR

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Known in Turkish as the Mısır Çarşısı, which roughly translates as 'Egyptian Bazaar', alongside the Khari Baoli in India it's one of the oldest and most renowned spice markets in the world. Built in 1660, the bazaar was the hub of what was still one of the key centres of global trade. The bustling market was part of what is termed a külliye – buildings associated to and connected with a mosque, in this case The New Mosque. The intention was that the money provided by the rent of the various stalls within the bazaar would go towards paying for the upkeep of the mosque.

The Egyptian Bazaar earns its name from the fact that the construction was paid for by taxes on goods imported from Egypt. Many of these goods were then placed on sale within the bazaar, including spices and natural medicines. Centuries later, the market is today still primarily known for selling spices, natural medicines and food.

The bazaar's two elevated entrances at one point had a very unusual purpose. One was specifically designed to settle disagreements between tradesmen and the other between tradesmen and their customers. A judge would sit and hear each case, as if in court, before making a decision.

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JANE AUSTEN'S ENGLAND

How Regency romance, society and family bonds inspired one of the nation's greatest authors

Written by Emily Staniforth

"It isn't what we say or think that defines us, but what we do"
- Jane Austen

Jane Austen certainly did a lot in her short life. As a young unmarried woman, she authored six witty romantic novels that today provide insight into a now-foreign world. Growing up in rural Hampshire, life in the Georgian English countryside heavily influenced her work. Her focus on the lives of women and the inequality they faced as well as issues of family, status, reputation and money all permeate Jane's work, themes that have proven timeless and contribute to the enduring popularity of her novels. As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of her birth, here we reflect on how the world around Jane influenced her and helped her forge a legacy as one of England's greatest writers.

LIFE IN RURAL ENGLAND

At the time of Jane's birth in 1775, only around 20 percent of the population of England lived in big

EXPERT BIOS

JOHN MULLAN
Mullan is a professor of English at University College London, specialising in 18th century literature. He is the author of *What Matters in Jane Austen?: Twenty Essential Questions Answered* (Bloomsbury, 2012) that was reissued in 2025 as a special anniversary edition.

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CAROLINE SANDERSON
Sanderson is an author and journalist who has written a number of non-fiction books and biographies. She is the author of *Jane Austen: The Life of a Literary Titan* (The History Press, 2025) and *A Rambling Fancy: In the Footsteps of Jane Austen* (Cadogan Guides, 2006).

Illustration by: Kevin McGivern

ABOVE Jane moved to this house in Chawton, Hampshire, in 1809

TOP-INSET Of all her siblings, Jane was closest to her only sister Cassandra, with whom she lived her entire life

MIDDLE-INSET The writing desk at Chawton where Jane wrote and edited her novels

BOTTOM-INSET The large Bennet family of *Pride and Prejudice* may have been inspired by Jane and her many siblings

industrial cities; the rest of the populace, like the Austen family, lived in rural villages. Agriculture and farming provided an income for around one-third of the population, though throughout Jane's life this number became fewer as the Agricultural Revolution swept through the country and eradicated jobs for many rural workers. However, Jane's family were largely untouched by the challenges facing the agrarian working class.

The Austen family were members of the landed gentry class and as such were more financially secure than the rural labourers living in their community. But they weren't particularly affluent. George Austen, the patriarch of the family, was a cleric in the Church of England and together with his wife Cassandra and their children lived in the rectory of a small village in Hampshire called Steventon, where he served as the vicar. Jane was born at the house on 16 December 1775, the seventh of the Austens' eight children, and lived there for the first 25 years of her life. Her whole life revolved around the family home for a lengthy period of time, meaning her immediate view of the world around her may have been quite narrow. "Steventon was quite a remote, small village… she spent the first 20-plus years of her life [living a] very rural existence," explains Caroline Sanderson, author of *Jane Austen: The Life of a Literary Titan* and *A Rambling Fancy: In the Footsteps of Jane Austen*.

> "Jane Austen's family was a really bookish, open minded, intelligent, optimistic, enlightened group of people"

John Mullan, author of *What Matters in Jane Austen?* says: "It used to be thought that Jane was rather sequestered from the world, but actually her family was quite a worldly one… They read the newspapers, they knew what was going on, and they actually had a busy social life with neighbours and acquaintances. So she wasn't as out of touch as people think, and she would have been very well aware, for instance, of the conditions of rural labourers and the existence of rural poverty."

To supplement the family income, George Austen farmed the small plot of land allocated to the rectory as well as renting a larger farm. The Austens worked hard to provide for their children and were fairly self-sufficient, growing much of their own food on their land. Jane, like most young girls and women of her time, was expected to help with the running of the household with tasks such as cooking, laundry, cleaning and other domestic duties.

EDUCATION

As a child, Jane briefly attended school alongside her only sister Cassandra. The Austen girls were sent to a boarding school in Oxford in 1783, and moved with the school to Southampton in the same year, though they were brought home after contracting typhus. Instead of returning to the school, the girls were educated at home for a while until they were sent to Reading Ladies' Boarding School in 1785. Like all girls of her era, Jane's education consisted of lessons on needlework, spelling, dancing and French, with an emphasis on preparing young women for marriage and life as a mother and housewife. In England at this time, around 40 percent of women could read and write and it was not unusual for a woman of Jane's status to receive some form of formal education. We don't know if she enjoyed going to school, but she was only there for a short while – by 1786, Jane and Cassandra had once again been brought home because the fees were too expensive for the Austens.

Home education was the most common choice for young girls during the Georgian era, with many parents, particularly mothers, choosing to teach their daughters domestic lessons and the basics of reading and writing. Learning the rules of etiquette in respectable Georgian society would also have been paramount

The Life of Jane Austen

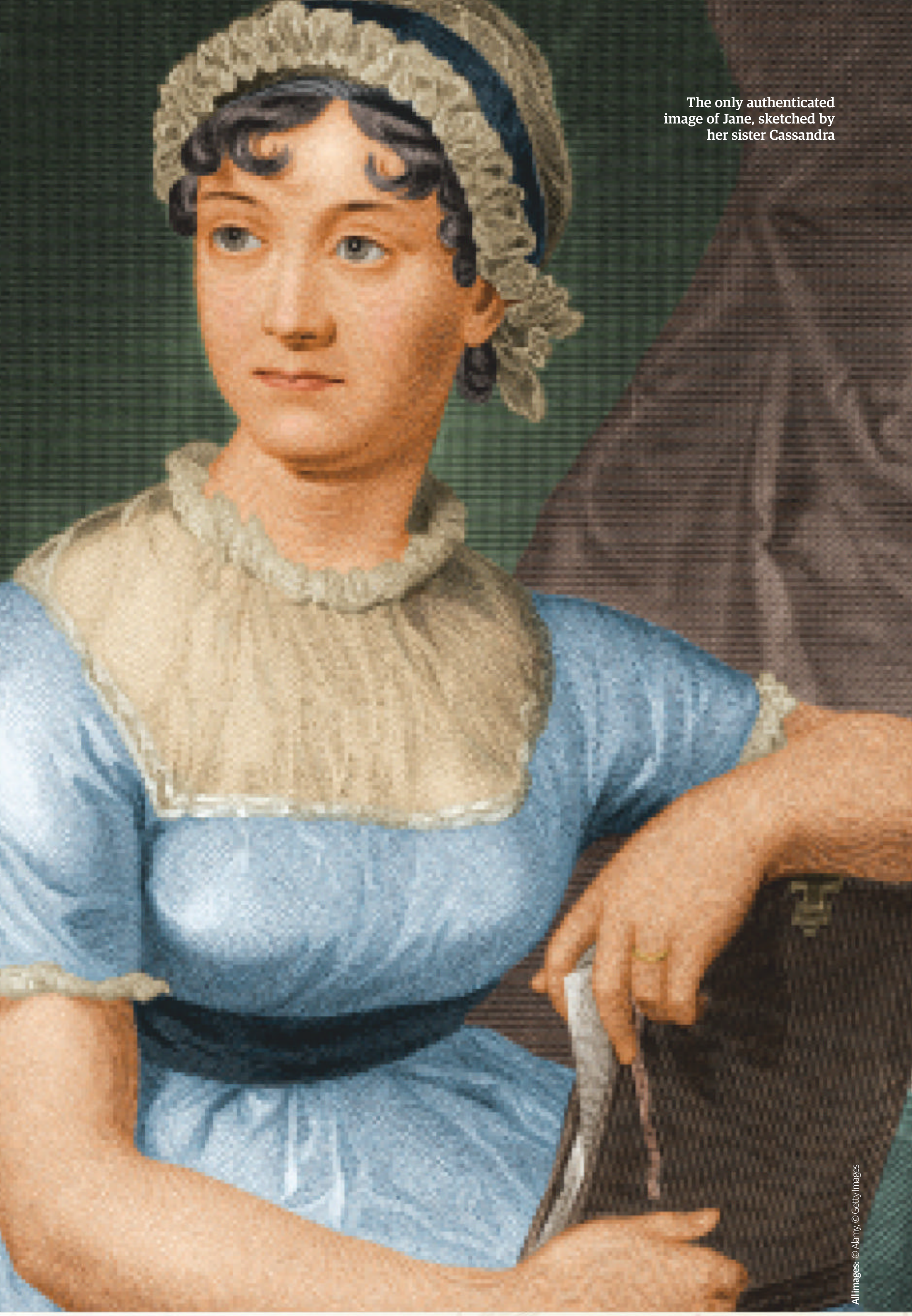
16 December 1775
Jane Austen is born at Steventon Rectory in Hampshire to George and Cassandra Austen. She is their seventh child.

June 1779
Charles Austen, Jane's only younger sibling, is born at Steventon Rectory.

1783
Jane and her sister Cassandra are sent to school in Oxford and then Southampton. They contract typhus and are sent home to Steventon.

1783
Edward Austen is adopted by the wealthy Knight family.

1785
Jane and Cassandra attend Reading Ladies' Boarding School.



The only authenticated image of Jane, sketched by her sister Cassandra

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

1786
School fees become too expensive for the Austens and Jane and Cassandra are once again brought home.

1786
Frank Austen, one of Jane's older brothers, joins the Royal Naval Academy in Portsmouth.

1787
Jane begins writing for the first time. Her initially unpublished childhood works are later referred to as her Juvenilia.

1790
One of her earliest stories, Jane authors *Love and Friendship*.

1791
Charles Austen, Jane's younger brother, joins the Royal Naval Academy.

AUSTEN'S NOVELS

Her six completed novels continue to capture the imagination of people all over the world

Sense and Sensibility

The Dashwood sisters Elinor and Marianne have to leave their beloved family home following the death of their father. Together, the two women navigate issues of romance and heartbreak as they build their new life. Elinor is the more pragmatic and measured sister ("sense") while Marianne is more melodramatic and ruled by her deep emotions ("sensibility").

Pride and Prejudice

Arguably Austen's most famous novel, *Pride and Prejudice* follows the five daughters of the Bennet family as their mother attempts to find them wealthy husbands. The story focuses on Elizabeth Bennet, the second sister, and her romance with the notorious Mr Darcy, both of whom make wrong judgements of one another before falling in love.

Mansfield Park

Fanny Price is sent to live with her wealthy uncle as a child. She struggles in her new home and is treated badly by her relatives. The novel follows Fanny as she grows up and becomes surrounded by a number of people who act and behave badly, challenging her morality as she navigates social and ethical issues.

for girls of a similar social standing to Jane. While the family may not have been the most financially stable, George Austen ensured that his daughters were educated and intellectually stimulated at home. "He was not economically privileged, but he was culturally and educationally privileged," explains Mullan. "Everything Jane learned, she learned at home, especially from her father, with whom she was very close and I think whose favourite she was."

Jane was lucky to be born into a family where reading and writing were encouraged for daughters. At Steventon Rectory, George Austen was the owner of an extensive library to which Jane had full access. He also ran a small boarding school for boys from the family home. It's possible that Jane may have been able to learn alongside these boys under her father's tutelage, though we don't know for certain. Regardless, she certainly benefited from her father's encouragement and high regard for education. This was not unique for the period but it was certainly unusual.

> "Inspiration for some of Jane's characters seems to have been taken from the lives of her many brothers"

"I don't think people always realise that Jane Austen's family was a really bookish, open minded, intelligent, optimistic, enlightened group of people," says Mullan. "I think that she was very lucky and I think she knew that. She was devoted not just to her sister but to her brothers and her parents as well and it was to the family that she owed her reading and her interest in books."

As a young woman Jane was a voracious reader with a passion for novels. It's more than likely that her reading of

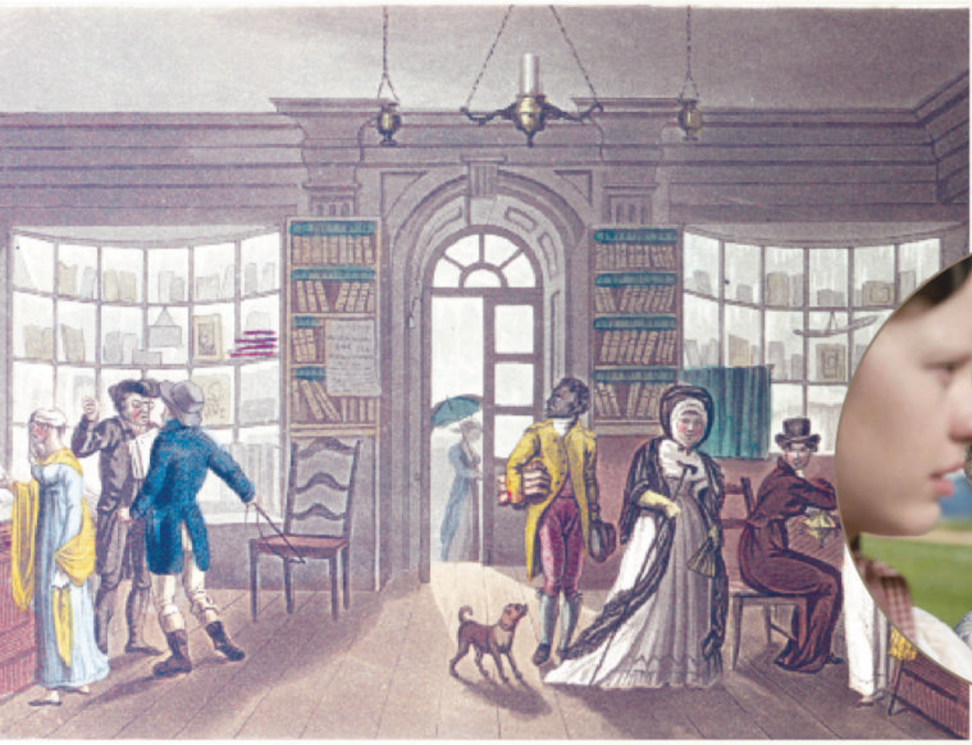
1792
Jane writes the novella *Lesley Castle.*

1794
She writes another novella, *Lady Susan*. It's later published in 1871, over 50 years after Jane's death.

1794
Thomas Knight dies and leaves his estate, including Godmersham Park and Chawton House, to Edward Austen.

1795
Jane begins to write a novel entitled *Elinor and Marianne*. It's later published as *Sense and Sensibility.*

1796
First Impressions, the first draft of *Pride and Prejudice*, is begun by Jane.



FAR-LEFT Jane's naval officer brother Charles was promoted to a lieutenant in 1797 in recognition of his actions at the Battle of Camperdown in the French Revolutionary Wars

LEFT Many readers in Jane's era borrowed novels from local circulating libraries

female authors such as Fanny Burney, Ann Radcliffe, Maria Edgeworth and Regina Maria Roche inspired her to start writing her own stories. Her appetite for reading, along with an enthusiasm for putting on plays and performances with and for her family "gave her lots of influences in terms of other writers," suggests Sanderson. "Jane was very funny and learned the effect that her words produced on an audience. She tried them out on members of the family and friends and saw what worked and what didn't work." This habit of turning to her family for feedback continued for much of her life when she began seriously writing.

Family

For Jane, family was particularly important as a girl and later as an unmarried woman. Traditionally, single Georgian women continued to reside with their families and only moved out of the family home when they wed. Jane, who never married, spent her entire life living with family members, particularly with her older sister Cassandra, who also never married. Jane's decision to remain a single woman kept her relationships with her brothers especially close, as it was their responsibility as the men of the family to ensure their sisters were looked after financially and socially.

Inspiration for some of her characters seems to have been taken from the lives of her brothers. Her eldest brother James and favourite brother Henry became clergymen, which was not unusual in Georgian England. Life in the church gave sons a way to secure an income and status. Given Jane's close familial ties with the church, it's hardly a coincidence that three of her heroines - Elinor Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* and Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* - each find their happy ending by marrying clergymen.

Another of Jane's older brothers, Edward, lived a very different existence from the rest of the Austen family having been adopted in his teenage years by Thomas Knight, a distant cousin of George Austen, and his wife Catherine. The Knights were a

▶

Emma

Emma Woodhouse believes she is a skilled matchmaker and sets out to pair up the people around her, including her friend Harriet Smith with the local vicar. However, Emma's meddling causes trouble, the consequences of which she has to deal with as well as her concealed feelings for her childhood friend George Knightley.

Northanger Abbey

The Tilney family invite the young Catherine Morland to stay with them in their grand home Northanger Abbey. Catherine has grown up immersing herself in Gothic literature that ignites her vivid imagination. In the surroundings of Northanger Abbey, her imagination runs wild and she must learn the realities of life and separate the real world from the fictional world.

Persuasion

A novel about second chances and regret, *Persuasion* follows the story of Anne Elliot, a maturing woman who once rejected a proposal from the love of her life Captain Wentworth. Anne encounters him again in Bath and has to confront the consequences of her prior decision, her family's opinion and the possibility of reconciliation.

1798
Jane starts writing *Susan*, a novel that is later titled *Northanger Abbey*.

1801
Jane, Cassandra and their parents move to Bath following George Austen's retirement. They live at 4 Sydney Place.

December 1802
Harris Bigg-Wither proposes to Jane. She initially accepts the proposal before rejecting it the following day.

1803
Henry Austen, Jane's brother, sells the novel *Susan* to a publisher on Jane's behalf. It is not published.

1804
The Austens move to lodgings in Green Park Buildings in Bath.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

wealthy childless couple who adopted Edward as their heir. He inherited the impressive Knight family home and estate of Godmersham Park in Kent and later changed his name to Knight, though he remained close with his biological family and frequently invited Jane and Cassandra to spend time at Godmersham. There are many parallels that can be drawn between Edward's unexpected rise to wealth and the adoption of *Mansfield Park*'s protagonist Fanny Price from a struggling family into the home of her rich uncle.

IN THE NAVY

Two of Jane's brothers, Francis (Frank) and Charles, took positions in the Royal Navy at a young age. In late 18th century England the navy provided good opportunities for the younger sons of the landed gentry who were unlikely to inherit the family holdings. Yet serving in the navy was a dangerous occupation in the 1790s as conflict between England and France began to ramp up. With the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars in 1803, Jane and the rest of her family, along with thousands of other English families, would have lived in a constant state of worry for the safety of their menfolk at sea.

"[Frank and Charles] went into the navy when they were 13 years old. They were midshipmen by the age of 15, and by the age of 16 they were seeing action. They were in battles. They were fighting the French, they were in blockades and sea battles and interceptions at sea. They lived, by our standards, extraordinarily dangerous and adventurous lives," says Mullan. "They will have come home each time for their shore leave and they would have told their beloved sister about what they'd been up to. That certainly had a big effect on her fiction."

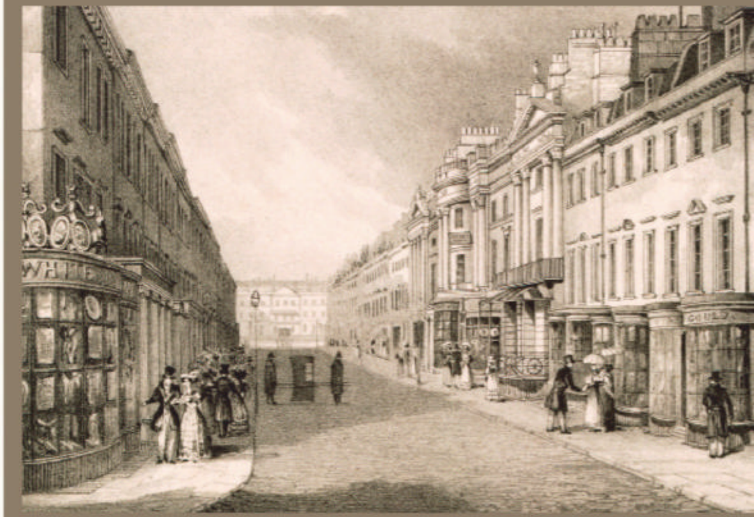
One of the clearest impacts of Jane's exposure to the activities of the Royal Navy on her work can be seen in *Persuasion* with the heroine Anne Elliot's love interest Captain Wentworth. Jane paints a picture of Wentworth as a naval officer who has fought heroically in the Napoleonic Wars and has been awarded prize money for capturing enemy ships. While Jane's brothers certainly were not as rich as Wentworth became from prize money, they too earned extra income from the capture of enemy ships. In one instance, Charles, the youngest of the Austen siblings, gifted Jane and Cassandra with topaz crosses he'd bought with his naval prize money. This act of kindness highlighted the closeness of Charles with his sisters and inspired a scene in *Mansfield Park* where Fanny Price is given an amber cross by her naval officer brother.

THE BIG CITY

In 1801, Jane's life changed when she moved away from her small home village in Hampshire to the city of Bath in Somerset with her family. Her father had retired and relocated with his wife and daughters to the spa town for its supposed health benefits and society scene. It was not unusual for families like the Austens to make the move to a city in search of opportunities to socialise and find eligible candidates for marriage.

The hustle and bustle of city life in Bath was a dramatic change for Jane, who had spent her whole life in the countryside. It's clear that she found her years in Bath a complex time, as it's believed she didn't write any of her finished novels while living in the city. In 1805, life became harder when tragedy struck the Austens with the sudden death of her beloved father. Devastated by the loss and reeling from the shock, Jane and her mother and sister moved to cheaper accommodation, living in three different homes in just one year. "They were constantly moving around because Bath was very expensive, and

> "The hustle and bustle of city life in Bath was a dramatic change for Jane"



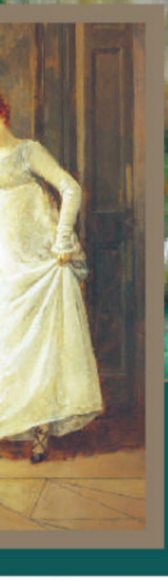
January 1805
George Austen, Jane's father, dies suddenly. The Austens are devastated and Jane moves with her mother and sister to 25 Gay Street.

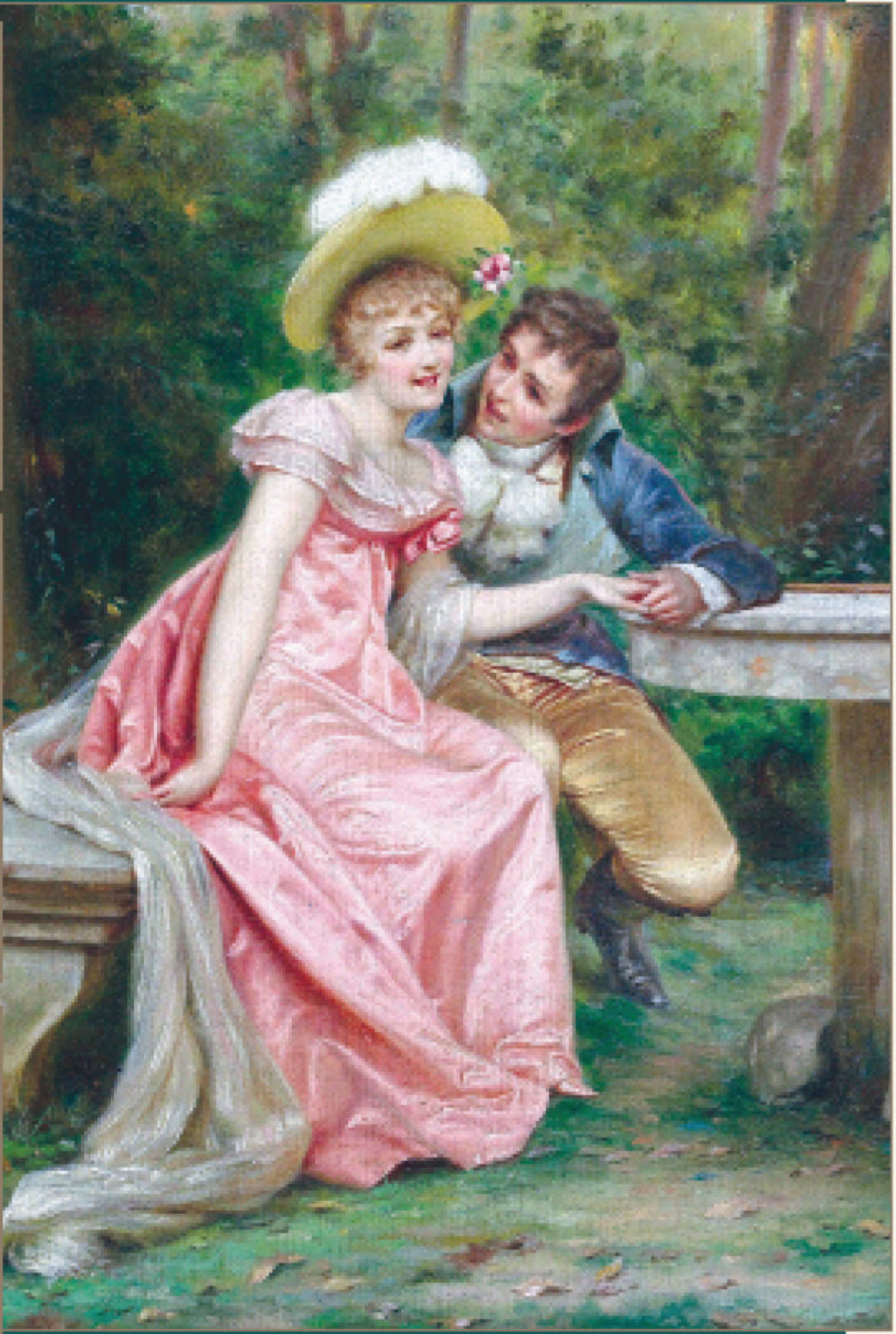
1806
Jane and her family move to Southampton for a while to live with her brother Frank.

1809
The Austens move to Chawton, their final move during Jane's lifetime. At Chawton she begins to write and edit her past work.

February 1811
Jane begins to write *Mansfield Park*.

October 1811
Sense and Sensibility is the first of Jane's novels to be released. It's published anonymously.





TOP-LEFT Rural life in the Regency period centred around farming for many families

MIDDLE-LEFT Bath was a fashionable and popular city for the middle and upper classes during the Regency era

BOTTOM-LEFT In Bath, society balls allowed young men and women the opportunity to meet eligible candidates for marriage

ABOVE Romance and courtship is a central theme of all Jane's novels

they had to find somewhere that they could afford, particularly after George died," explains Sanderson. "They then had to go and camp out with Frank Austen in Southampton. There was constant moving around and no sense of being settled so I think that must have been such a challenge for Jane and her writing." Despite her complicated feelings towards the city, Jane used her time in Bath to take in the comings and goings of the social scene. Sanderson says: "I don't think Jane was particularly unhappy [in Bath], but I think it was a time of observing what was going on and storing up all that material."

WRITING IN CHAWTON

In July 1809 Jane was able to move back to Hampshire when her wealthy brother Edward offered his mother and sisters the use of a cottage in the village of Chawton. It was at Chawton that Jane's dreams of becoming a published author started to come true. Away from the stress of Bath and settled in her new home, she had the freedom to write and edit the novels she had been working on since her twenties. She drew on her experiences in Bath, in particular its thriving social scene, in novels like *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*.

Jane was fortunate in having her family's support to pursue her literary endeavours, as many unmarried fatherless women at the time would have had to find a way to ensure their own financial security and take on added responsibilities in the household. However, with Edward providing them with a home and with Cassandra shouldering the burden of increased domestic tasks while also taking on most of Jane's chores, Jane had the space to focus on her writing.

ROMANCE FOR REGENCY WOMEN

The prospect of marriage was ever-present for Jane throughout her life, as it was for most women in the Regency period. For many women, marriage was the only way they could build their own ▶

January 1813
Pride and Prejudice is published, also anonymously.

January 1814
Jane starts to write her next novel, *Emma*.

May 1814
Mansfield Park is published just a few years after Jane started writing it.

August 1815
Jane commences writing the novel *Persuasion*, initially titled *The Elliots*.

November 1815
The Prince Regent issues an invitation for Jane to visit his library.

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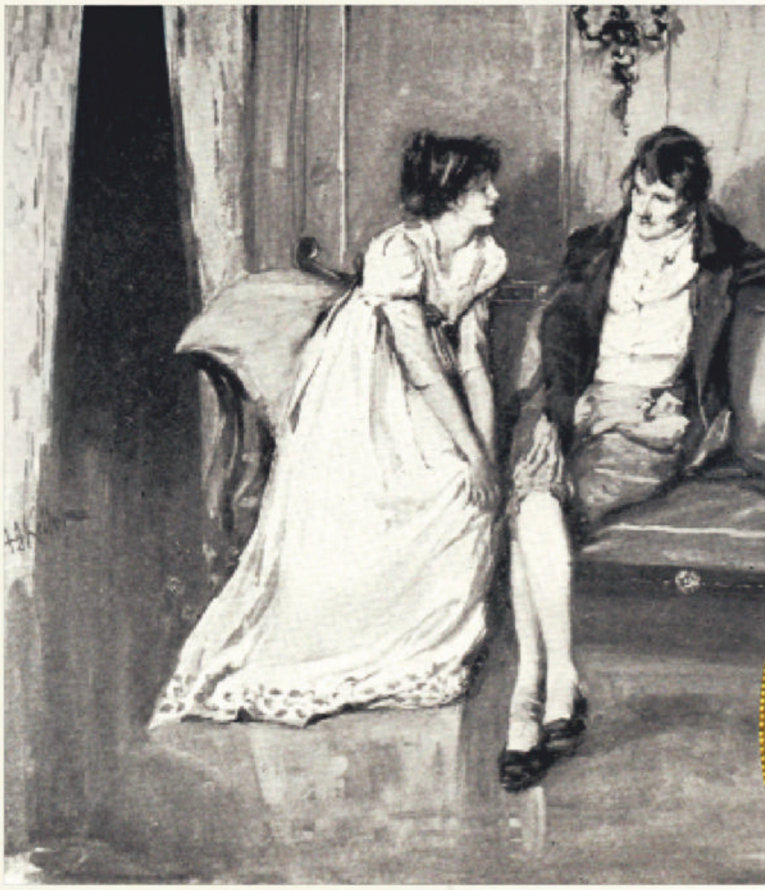

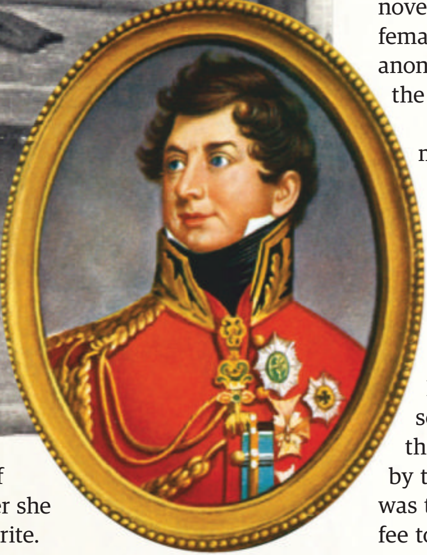

lives away from their family. As such, the challenge of trying to find love and making an advantageous match was a consistent theme in all of her novels.

Although we now associate Jane with tales of great romance, like that of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy or Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars, the marriages we see in her novels are not the happiest of unions. And although all of her novels end in marriage for the heroines, this does not necessarily mean Jane herself had a positive view of matrimony, and she remained single out of choice. In 1802, she turned down a marriage proposal from a man named Harris Bigg-Withers despite initially accepting it for financial reasons. Sanderson believes Jane rejected the offer because she knew that if she became a wife and mother she would not have the time to write. "If you look through her letters, there are lots of references to how sorry she is that someone's pregnant again," says Sanderson. "It's really striking that she was horrified by the fact that women around her were constantly pregnant and constantly worn out."

> "One of Jane's earliest fans was the Prince Regent, who would later become King George IV"

Jane was lucky enough that she could choose not to marry. Other women of her time were not so fortunate, as is highlighted in some of her novels. Charlotte Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, agrees to marry the repugnant Mr Collins for financial and social safety, much to the dismay of protagonist Elizabeth Bennet.

TOP Of all Jane Austen's characters, Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy are arguably the most beloved couple

ABOVE-INSET *Emma* (1815) was dedicated to the Prince Regent

OPPOSITE-LEFT A depiction of Jane's heroine Emma

OPPOSITE-RIGHT In October 2025 a statue of Jane Austen was unveiled at Winchester Cathedral, where she was buried in 1817

AUSTEN'S AUDIENCE

Jane was finally published in 1811 with her novel *Sense and Sensibility*. Distributed by publisher Thomas Egerton of London, the novel did not feature her name on the title page. Instead the author was simply credited as "a Lady". The reason for this decision is unknown – perhaps Jane wanted to maintain her privacy? It was not unusual for women to write books and many of the great novelists of the Georgian age were female. Regardless of the reason, the anonymity of the author did not hamper the success of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Following her initial success, three more of Jane's novels were published in her lifetime. These were likely read by members of the gentry and elite classes who could afford to buy or borrow books. Yet for those members of society with plenty of disposable income, buying a book would still have been expensive. During Jane's lifetime, novels were sold unbound in multiple volumes that could then be bound in leather by the purchaser. For many people this was too costly, and paying an annual fee to a local circulating library where they could borrow novels was more affordable. This is likely how many people in Jane's own time read her work.

However, circulating libraries would have been too expensive for a great majority of the working class population. "Men and women of her own class and higher would have read her work but it's unlikely in her own day that she would have been read by members of the labouring classes, unlike a later novelist like [Charles] Dickens," explains Mullan. "Later in the 19th century, you could read your fiction in magazines and journals, and you could get a cheap weekly periodical, which gave you stories, but that didn't exist in Jane's time."

One of her earliest fans was the Prince Regent, who would later become King George IV. He so admired Jane's novels that he set out to discover the identity of the mysterious anonymous

December 1815
Emma is published with a dedication to the Prince Regent.

January - May 1817
While working on another novel, which would later be called *Sanditon*, Jane becomes ill. Within a few months she is confined to her bed. She later moves to Winchester with Cassandra for treatment.

18 July 1817
Jane dies at the age of 41 in Winchester. She is buried at Winchester Cathedral.

December 1817
Her final two completed novels, *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*, are published posthumously and, for the first time, under her own name.

1925
Sanditon, Jane's last and unfinished novel, is published.

ENDURING APPEAL

Why do we still read Jane Austen?

Of all the authors of the Regency era, she is arguably the most well-known and the writer whose work is still being read, admired and adapted. The relatable and timeless subject matter of Jane's novels allow a 21st century reader to connect with her stories in the same way that people did when they were first written. But there were many others from that period who wrote about the same themes as Austen, including authors such as Fanny Burney, Maria Edgeworth and Amelia Opie to name just a few. So what makes Jane's work special?

Professor John Mullan believes the answer is simple: "Jane Austen had the gift of genius. She allowed the reader to inhabit her characters: not just see them but actually experience them as thinking human beings. She has this extraordinary ability to write dramatically through her characters. Virginia Woolf said that the extraordinary thing about Jane Austen in her novels is that she's hardly there at all. She's not telling you what to think. It's as if the characters are living of and through themselves."

LEFT The annual Jane Austen Festival in Bath attracts thousands of people from across the globe

author and ultimately invited Jane to his residence in London to tour his library. On this visit, it was suggested to her that she might like to dedicate her next novel to him, a request that likely horrified Jane because she was no great fan of the Prince and his extravagant, adulterous lifestyle. But she was pragmatic and must have known that a royal endorsement would only be a good thing for her reputation. When *Emma* was published in 1815, she dedicated the novel to the prince.

Just two years after the publication of *Emma*, Jane died from a mysterious illness. She was 41 years old. For some time before her death, she had been unwell and had moved to Winchester, where she would pass away, to seek treatment. Medical reviews of Jane's reported symptoms have suggested many causes of her sickness, from Addison's disease to lupus to arsenic poisoning. With her death, England lost its greatest author and the possibility of what she might have written and achieved if she had lived.

The England of today is a very different place to the one Jane lived in, but the themes and plots of her novels still resonate with people from all levels of society. Her legacy lives on in the continuing popularity of her novels and the constant reinterpretations of her stories in literature, film, music and television. In many ways, we are still living in Jane's England. Her face is seen every day on the £10 note, her beautiful words are regularly quoted, and her work and life are celebrated all over the world. Since her death, Jane Austen and her writing have become inextricably woven into the identity of England. ○

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HISTORY'S BIGGEST TOY CRAZES

THE GIFTS THAT WENT FROM NOVELTY TO SUPERNOVA ON THE SHELVES

Written by Jonathan Gordon

The manic rush to grab the 'it' toy of the holiday season has been immortalised in film and television over the years. There was a great deal of social cache attached to being able to give your child the gift of the season. What that gift would be, however, was always changing and evolving. Toys have played an important role in the lives of children for millennia, but it was only with the mass production and international shipping of the 20th century that novelties could go from local favourite to international sensation. Here we take a look at some of the most explosive toy crazes from the previous century, how they emerged and the legacy they left behind.

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BARBIE

RELEASED: 1959
SOLD: 1 BILLION

The brainchild of Mattel cofounder Ruth Handler, Barbie sold 300,000 dolls in the first year despite industry scepticism that children would want to play with a doll of an adult woman. Handler was inspired after seeing her own daughter, Barbara, playing with paper dolls and based her design on a novelty toy from Germany called the Bild Lilli doll. From the start, Barbie was all about being aspirational for children, giving them an opportunity to play with visions of adulthood, and it caught on fast.

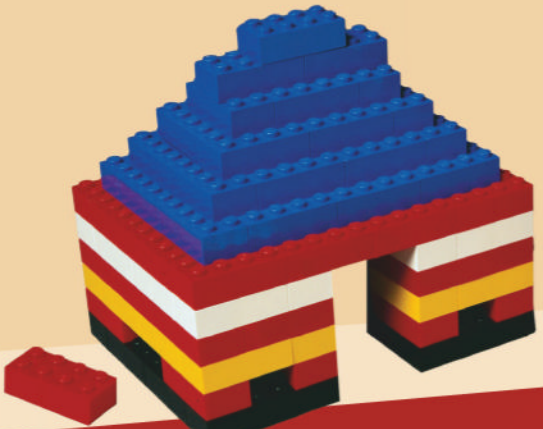
Despite courting its fair share of criticism and controversy over the years (in terms of women's body image and promotion of materialism), Barbie also tapped into the growing social changes of the 1960s, with versions of the doll dressed for jobs from aircraft engineer to zoo keeper. Unlike baby dolls, which had dominated the market, Barbie was intended to open up the possibilities for young girls of what life could be. The recent *Barbie* movie taps into that and also explores a remarkable amount of the history too.

LEGO

RELEASED: 1949 SOLD: UNKNOWN

It's hard to quantify exactly how many LEGO sets have been sold in the last 76 years, given the bewildering variety of brick sets that have been produced. LEGO estimates that between seven and eight sets are sold worldwide every second, totalling over 200 million a year.

It all started with a Danish carpenter called Ole Kirk Christiansen, who began making wooden toys in 1932. In 1946 he began experimenting with plastic injection-moulding and in 1949 released LEGO's first 'Automatic Binding Bricks'. The big breakthrough for the company came in 1958 when the coupling-brick design was introduced, allowing the brick to connect more firmly and opening up design possibilities. A fire at LEGO's wooden toy warehouse in 1960 also led to a full commitment to plastic toy production. The infinite possibilities of LEGO struck a chord and the toy has been a hugely popular gift for children (and adults!) ever since. It's certainly lived up to the Danish phrase from which its name derives – 'leg godt' – which means 'play well'.



BUZZ LIGHTYEAR

RELEASED: 1995 SOLD: 50,000 (LIMITED STOCK)

SPACE RANGER
LIGHTYEAR

The release of the Buzz Lightyear action figure, based on the character from *Toy Story*, was actually a bit of a disaster. Disney wanted to cash in on the massive success of its 3D animated movie and planned to release a replica doll as soon as possible, but uncertainty over *Toy Story*'s box-office appeal before its release and licensing troubles resulted in 300 million unrealised toy sales.

Toy manufacturer Mattel only signed on five months before the film appeared in cinemas and didn't promote the toy before its release, so it wasn't until Christmas of 1996, a full year later, that the Buzz Lightyear craze took hold. However, only about 250,000 were manufactured, well below the estimated demand of two million. Some suspected the shortage was just a cynical marketing ploy, and the huge demand certainly gained Buzz Lightyear a lot of attention. Either way, the action figure was one of the biggest toy crazes of the 1990s.

Disneyland

FURBY

RELEASED: 1998 SOLD: 58 MILLION

Furby, the brainchild of Hasbro and its recently acquired Tiger Electronics, took interactive dolls to a whole new level. Looking like something between a Gremlin and an owl, the strange creature could react to speech and touch, making it remarkably and sometimes rather creepily lifelike. Its clever internal mechanisms meant it could behave like a traditional animatronic doll, with eyelids that opened and closed, ears that wiggled and a mouth that moved as it spoke 'Furbish'.

As the Furby craze swept across the world in 1998 it led to a panic thanks to the toy's groundbreaking ability to react to sound and its environment, causing confusion and suspicion about the technology inside it. In America, the Federal Aviation Authority banned it from flights, concerned it could interfere with electronic aircraft systems, and the National Security Agency banned it from its offices over fears it could record people's conversations (it couldn't).

SYLVANIAN FAMILIES

RELEASED: 1985 SOLD: 100 MILLION

The Sylvanian Families range is a great example of something that a number of toy-makers seemed to be realising in the 1980s – if you tell a story about your toy as well as making it fun, it will sell more units. These small anthropological creatures, looking like adorable animals from hedgehogs to elephants, had backstories to go with their cute design. Made by Japanese company Epoch, these animal shopkeepers, farmers and craftspeople with families and homes lived in the idyllic rural setting of Sylvania (sylvan meaning 'of the forest'), tapping into classic children's stories.

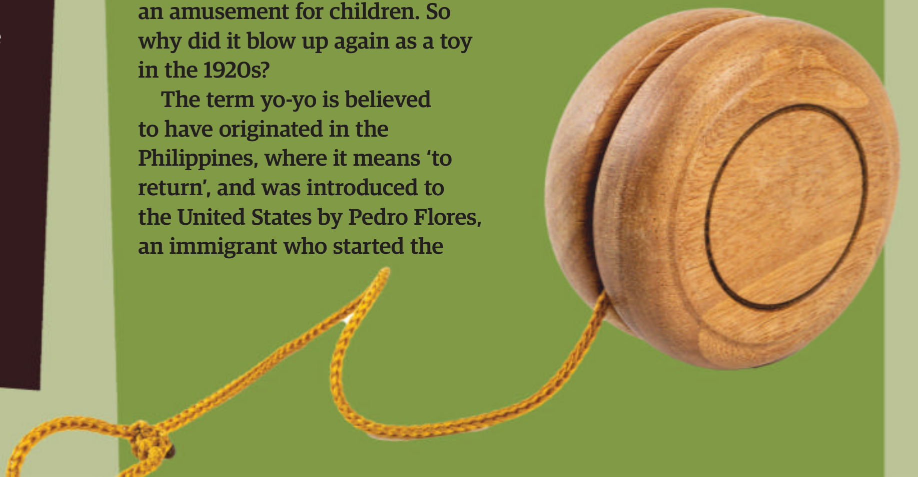
Although launched in Japan, the range proved to be a massive success in the UK, where the Sylvanian Families won toy of the year for three consecutive years. With their collectible nature, backstories and design, you can see the blueprint for later crazes like *Pokémon* and *Animal Crossing* emerging from these toys.

YO-YO

RELEASED: 1928 SOLD: UNKNOWN

The yo-yo is easily the oldest of the toys in this feature, with a history that has been traced back to at least pre-500 BCE in China. It's also in that year that we get our first recorded mention of such an object in ancient Greece. A yo-yo is just two discs connected together with a length of string attached, and it has reappeared over the centuries as an amusement for children. So why did it blow up again as a toy in the 1920s?

The term yo-yo is believed to have originated in the Philippines, where it means 'to return', and was introduced to the United States by Pedro Flores, an immigrant who started the Flores Yo-Yo Company. This was bought by an American, Donald F Duncan, in 1929 and he began using yo-yo trick performers to advertise the product. Duncan is credited with looping the string around the axis of the toy rather than tying it, allowing new tricks to be performed that wowed young crowds in the United States and Europe.



ETCH A SKETCH

RELEASED: 1960 SOLD: 170 MILLION

Was the Etch A Sketch magic? The way some toys make use of a simple piece of technology can certainly cast a spell on kids. (The Magic 8 Ball, released about a decade earlier, had a similar feel.) The Etch A Sketch allowed users to draw pictures on its screen by turning two wheels that controlled vertical and horizontal movement, utilising charged aluminium that stuck to the glass.

The idea came from André Cassagnes, a French electrician who noticed these properties and thought it could make a good drawing game for youngsters. But his novel concept wasn't immediately obvious to potential investors when he took it to toy fairs in Nuremberg and New York. It was ultimately picked up by Ohio Art Company in 1959 and it pushed the new toy hard on TV screens to get attention. Priced at $2.99 (approx $32 today), Etch A Sketch sold 600,000 units in the first year, tapping into the appeal of its novelty and creative potential.

MAGIC Etch A Sketch SCREEN

RUBIK'S CUBE

RELEASED: 1980 SOLD: 500 MILLION

Hungarian Professor Ernő Rubik's design for his 'magic cube' didn't start as a toy concept; it began in 1974 because he wanted to demonstrate three-dimensional movement to his architecture classes. With some wooden blocks, glue and rubber bands, he made his 'Bűvös kocka'. The original prototype was turned into a product that could be used as a teaching aid - but it became so much more than that.

His ingenious handheld puzzle captured imaginations upon its wider release in 1977, but communist export controls threatened to keep it confined to Hungary. Thankfully, it made it to toy fairs around the world in 1979, where it was picked up by an American toy company. Renamed the Rubik's Cube, it went on sale in the West in 1980 and was an instant hit with children and adults alike. By 1987 it had already sold 14 million units globally.

GAME BOY

RELEASED: 1989 SOLD: 118 MILLION UNITS

Electronic toys had their fair share of successes in the 1970s and 1980s, such as Simon and Speak And Spell. Meanwhile, computer games were also emerging, but early home consoles could be prohibitively expensive. In 1989, the handheld accessibility of a toy was merged with the latest in gaming technology to bring us the Game Boy.

Nintendo's breakout handheld gaming device was, if you'll excuse the pun, a game-changer. The Japanese company had actually dipped its toes into this field with the single-game devices called Game & Watch, starting in 1980. With game cartridges, much like Nintendo's home consoles the Game Boy could offer a wider range of experiences. But the real market-breaking decision involved packaging the handheld device with copies of *Tetris*, a simple puzzle game regarded as one of the most addictive and popular games of the era. Nintendo had already proved successful with its Nintendo Entertainment System (called Famicom in Japan) in 1983, but the Game Boy opened up a whole new market for video games.

DOT MATRIX WITH STEREO SOUND
BATTERY
Nintendo GAME BOY™
B
A
SELECT
START
TETRIS

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TAMAGOTCHI

RELEASED: 1996 SOLD: 98 MILLION

These small electronic 'egg' devices managed to pack a lot of toy-history staples into a small package. You can see the genesis of these interactive electronic pets in the Pet Rocks of the 1970s, in the interactive dolls like Teddy Ruxpin in the 1980s, and in the videogames of the 1990s. Tamagotchi managed to mimic the responsibility of pet ownership in one interactive, innovative keychain-sized package.

Bandai released the first Tamagotchi in November 1996, giving kids a small, pixelated creature that needed feeding, cleaning and caring for. Fail to pay attention to its beeps and demands and the pet died, which caused a lot of problems for schools as students were constantly distracted by their digital pets' needs. Like many great ideas, it was a simple one and the devices began selling out in stores around the world. The craze was short-lived, but there are many Tamagotchi fans still out there and the devices still get updates to this day.

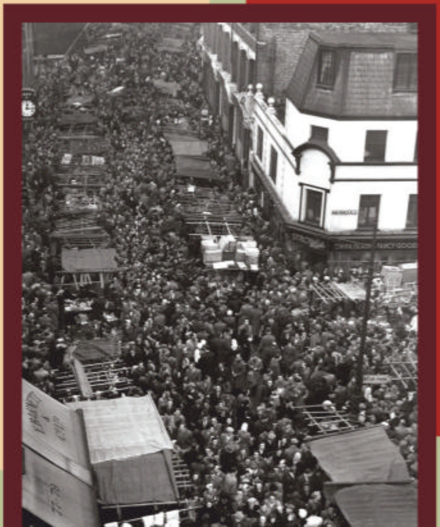
Mr. POTATO HEAD
FUNNY-FACE KIT
ANY FRUIT OR VEGETABLE MAKES A FUNNY FACE MAN

MR POTATO HEAD

RELEASED: 1952 SOLD: 100 MILLION

Released in 1952, Mr Potato Head was a huge hit in no small part because it was the first toy with a TV commercial aimed at children. Invented by George Lerner to encourage kids to eat their vegetables, the Mr Potato Head set began as an assortment of interchangeable plastic facial features and a Styrofoam head so kids could create their own characters. Production company Hassenfeld Brothers (who would become Hasbro) made $4 million from the toy in the first few months, and Lerner earned five percent in royalties on each set sold.

From 1953, additional family members like Mrs Potato Head, kids Yam and Spud, and an assortment of friends quickly expanded the toy range. In 1964 the Styrofoam head was replaced with the now well-known plastic potato. Since then the toy has been a staple, made famous once again with its appearance in *Toy Story* in 1995. Hasbro, meanwhile, went from strength to strength with its range of toys and games.

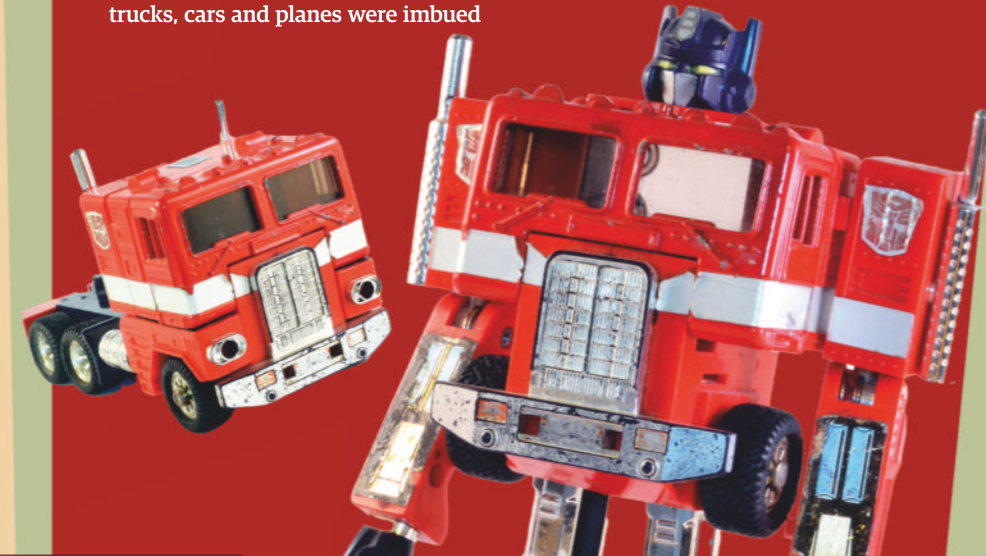


TRANSFORMERS

RELEASED: 1984 SOLD: $950 MILLION (1985-1990)

The smartest move Hasbro made in bringing the Transformers toy range to the world wasn't the transforming robots bit. That idea was actually someone else's. Hasbro bought the concept from Takara, a Japanese toy-maker in the early 1980s, seeing potential in the toy that was a hybrid of vehicle and action figure. The real money-making concept was to hire Marvel editor-in-chief Jim Shooter to write a backstory for the robots.

The war between the Autobots and Decepticons emerged, and the trucks, cars and planes were imbued with personalities. Launched in 1984, mainstay characters like Optimus Prime, Bumblebee and Megatron were all in the initial lineup. An animated TV series launched alongside the toys turned them into a cultural phenomenon. Suddenly the Transformers weren't just robot toys - they were on lunch boxes, pencil cases and dozens of other products. The cartoon's slogan that the Transformers were "more than meets the eye" was without doubt an understatement.



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Founder of the Persian Empire

Written by Wayne Bartlett

How Cyrus the Great forged his kingdom using force and smart administration of his government

Cyrus the Great founded one the most impressive regimes of the ancient world, the Persian Empire, which lasted for two centuries (550-330 BCE) until it was destroyed by Alexander the Great. Despite its significance, undisputed facts about Cyrus' conquests are thin on the ground. Scholars tease what they can from legend; from cuneiform tablets; from brief, one-sided accounts in the *Old Testament*; and from Cyrus' own statements justifying his prodigious conquests.

Before Cyrus' time, modern-day Turkey and rest of the Middle East was divided between three empires: Lydia in western Turkey; Media, which spread across to today's Central Asia; and Babylonia, spanning Iraq, Iran and the Mediterranean coast. The ancient Assyrian Empire had been divided between the Medes and the Babylonians. To the east and north, in the unknown heart of Asia, were the Scythians, nomadic horsemen who lived in a shadowy world beyond the horizons of civilisation.

Cyrus' homeland, Persia, had been founded by his ancestor Achaemenes when his tribe emerged from inner Asia two centuries earlier. Cyrus, the seventh king of the Achaemenid dynasty, was born either in about 600 BCE or 575 BCE – a 25-year difference that points to the unreliability of the available sources. When he was a child, Persia was an unremarkable dependency of Medes.

Herodotus, Greece's great historian and traveller, writing 100 years later, told of Cyrus' incredible rise. His grandfather, Astyages, king of the Medes, dreamt of a vine growing out of his genitals. Priests told him its meaning – that a descendant would overthrow him. His daughter Mandane was pregnant, so the king told a noble to kill the child. The noble delegated the task to a humble shepherd, who disobeyed and raised the child as his own. The truth came out when the boy play-acted being a king so convincingly that he came to Astyages' attention. Astyages recognised his grandson, who was, of course, Cyrus.

He spent his childhood with Astyages, being trained and educated. According to Greek historian and diarist Xenophon, he was a boy of rare intelligence and charm: "[He] was something too much of a talker, in part, may be, because of his bringing-up. He had been trained by his master, whenever he sat in judgment, to give a reason for what he did, and to look for the like reason from others. And moreover, his curiosity and thirst for knowledge were such that he must needs inquire from every one he met the explanation of this, that, and the other… talkativeness had become, as it were, his second nature. But… the impression left on the listener was not of arrogance, but of simplicity and warmheartedness… However, as he grew in stature and the years led him to the time when childhood passes into youth he became more chary of his words… but his company was still most fascinating, and little wonder: for whenever it came to a trial of skill between himself and his comrades he would never challenge his mates to those feats in which he himself excelled: he would start precisely one where he felt his own inferiority… and then, when he was worsted, he would be the first to laugh at his own discomfiture."

▶

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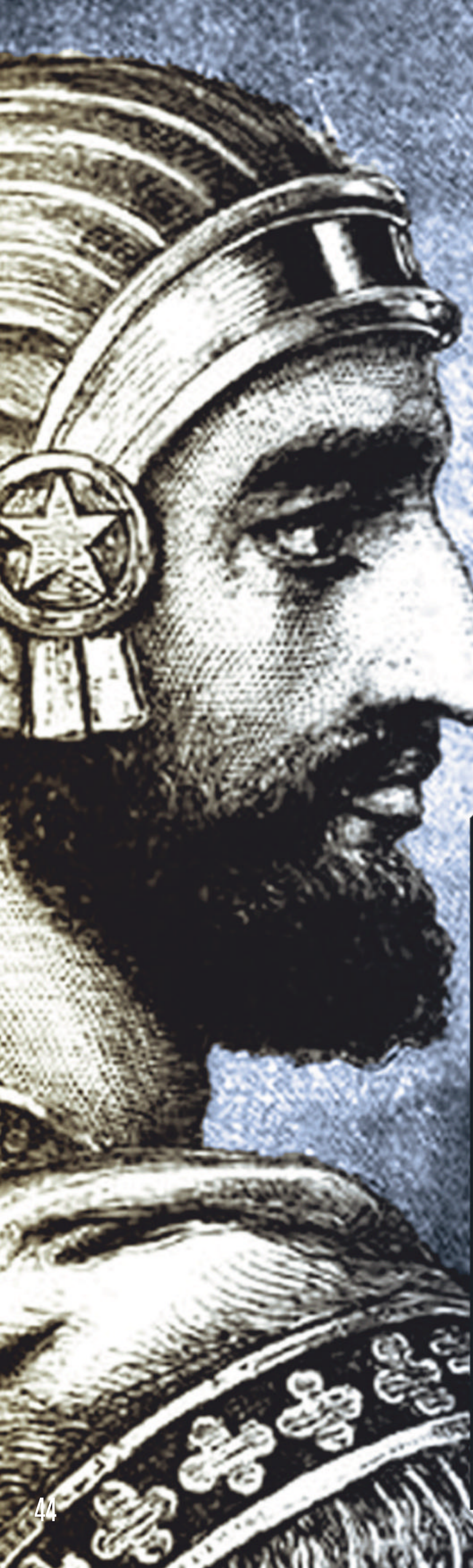
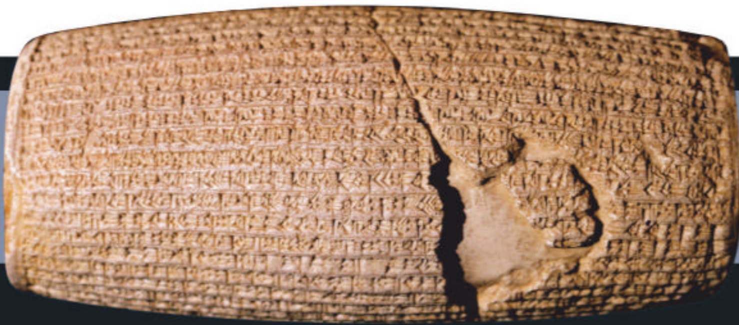


As a young man, Cyrus returned to his father's court in Persia, where he acceded to the throne in about 559 BCE. Herodotus picked up the story. To prevent his dream from coming true, Astyages invaded Persia. But Cyrus defeated him and, in about 550 BCE, took Media. In revenge, Astyages summoned the son of the noble who'd failed to kill the infant Cyrus and had him chopped up, roasted and boiled, and then tricked the noble into eating the boy.

Next in the crosshairs was Lydia, which fell a few years later. No details are recorded, though Herodotus has a story to fill the gap. The Lydian King Croesus, he of legendary wealth, consulted the oracle at Delphi and was told that if he attacked the Persians he would destroy "a great empire". He attacked but Cyrus, strengthened by Median troops, drove Croesus back inside his capital Sardis. Persian troops then scaled a supposedly unscaleable wall, the city fell and the "great empire" that Croesus ended up destroying was his own.

In 540 BCE, Cyrus turned on his next target, Babylon. Famous as the capital of a great empire for more than 1,000 years, the city had fallen on hard times until its fortunes revived under Nebuchadnezzar in the early 500s BCE, during which he sacked Jerusalem (587-586 BCE) and captured many Jews, an event vividly recorded in the Bible. By Cyrus' time, though, Babylon had become a soft target because its King Nabonidus had been absent for ten years (553–543 BCE), leaving the city in the hands of his son Belshazzar. His unexplained absence – perhaps trying to extend trade routes in Arabia – seems to have made him unpopular. Or perhaps he was unpopular because, on his return, he had all the images of Babylonian gods brought from their sanctuaries into the capital for safekeeping. Whatever the reason, it gave Cyrus an opportunity to present himself as the protector of Babylonian religion.

In 539 BCE – one of the few firm dates we have – Cyrus invaded Babylonia, won a battle at Opis to the north of the capital, then entered Babylon seemingly without further resistance. According to Herodotus, the Persians did this by diverting the River Euphrates, lowering the water level until they could march across the riverbed. Nabonidus was captured and he vanished from history, his fate unknown.



The Cyrus Cylinder

It's been called the first human rights charter, but what did it promise?

The *Cyrus Cylinder,* only 25cm long, is a major source for the king's achievements but also an unreliable one. It's damaged and the text is incomplete, and it is in effect propaganda justifying Cyrus' conquests and rule. The Babylonian King Nabonidus is denigrated and Cyrus is praised as the protector of Babylonian interests. The cuneiform text, here selected from the British Museum translation, reads in part...

"Rites inappropriate to [the cult-cities] were daily gabbled, and as an insult, he (Nabonidus) brought the daily offerings to a halt. In his mind, reverential fear of Marduk, king of the gods, came to an end. He did more evil to his city every day, and to his people. Enlil-of-the-gods became extremely angry at their complaints. The gods left their shrines, angry that he had made them enter into Babylon. Enlil-of-the-gods inspected and checked all the countries, seeking for the upright king of his choice. He took the hand of Cyrus, and called him by name, proclaiming him aloud for the kingship over all of everything. Marduk, the great lord, who nurtures his people, saw with pleasure his fine deeds and true heart, and ordered that he should go to Babylon. He had him enter without fighting or battle. He handed over to him Nabonidus, the king who did not fear him. All the people, nobles and governors, bowed down before him and kissed his feet, rejoicing over his kingship, and their faces shone. I am Cyrus, king of the universe, the great king, the powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world."

The tomb of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae, Iran

Cyrus recorded his conquest in the clay document known as the *Cyrus Cylinder*, a blatant piece of PR designed to justify his conquests. It claims that Nabonidus had been unstable and impious, and that the great god Enlil had chosen Cyrus as his instrument to bring peace by restoring the shrines, allowing refugees to return and rebuilding the capital. The cylinder declares: “I returned the images of the gods, who had resided there, to their places and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned to them their dwellings.” As a result, “all nobles and governors bowed down before him [Cyrus] and kissed his feet, and their faces shone.”

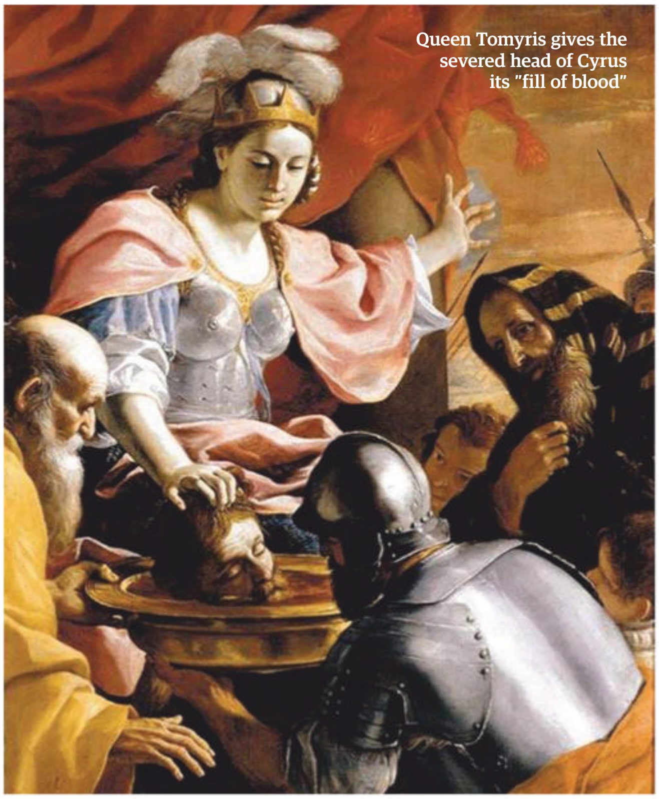
His generosity did not apply only to the local religions. The Jews were allowed to return from their captivity to Israel. Possibly (as the Bible says), Cyrus actually funded the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. In fact, the rebuilding occurred under his grandson Darius, but Cyrus' role became accepted as a fact. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus claimed to quote a letter from Cyrus: “I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before.” (Josephus was writing 500 years later, and presents no evidence for this.)

In any event, many Jews held Cyrus in high esteem. The prophet Isaiah called him God's “anointed” – in effect a Messiah – and prophesied God-given victories over all nations. Another prophet, Ezra, has Cyrus saying that God “hath given me all the kingdoms of the Earth.”

After the conquest of Babylon, where now? To the north and east lay another world to conquer, the land of the nomadic horsemen – the Scythians. Having appointed governors and officials to rule the different provinces and peoples of his empire, Cyrus probably died fighting the Scythians in 530 BCE. Again, we have no firm records, just stories, the best of which is told by Herodotus…

One of the Scythian tribes was called Massagetae, known for drinking fermented mares' milk and for the equality of the sexes. Armoured in helmets and war belts, men and women alike fought on horseback with battle axes and bows. At the time, they were ruled by a queen named Tomyris.

Nomadic horse-archers were almost impossible to defeat because they vanished like mist across the steppe. So (in Herodotus' tale) Cyrus resorted to trickery and set out a banquet with copious amounts of wine, which was unfamiliar to the milk-drinking nomads. The Persians withdrew, the nomads advanced, found the banquet, ate, drank and fell into a stupor. The Persians returned, killed most of them and took Tomyris' sleeping son prisoner. When he awoke, he committed suicide. Tomyris swore to get her revenge: “Leave my land now… or I will give you more blood than you can drink.” In the next battle, the nomads destroyed the Persians and killed Cyrus. Tomyris found the king's corpse, filled a skin container with blood, cut off his head and thrust it into the blood with these words: “Although I am alive and gained victory over you in battle, you have destroyed me because you took my son by trickery. Now I shall do just as I threatened and give you your fill of blood.”



Queen Tomyris gives the severed head of Cyrus its “fill of blood”

> “Cyrus had ruled for around 30 years, creating an empire more than 2,500km across, the largest the world had seen”

It is a vivid tale, but its truth for Herodotus was probably less in the details than the moral: great leaders should not resort to trickery.

Cyrus had ruled for around 30 years, creating an empire that spanned more than 2,500km across, the largest the world had seen, reaching from the Black Sea to present-day Afghanistan. His son Cambyses and another descendant Darius extended the empire into Egypt, Libya and India, but it was not to last. In the 330s BCE Alexander the Great defeated the Persians and the Achaemenids came to an ignominious end.

However, Cyrus' creation sent echoes down the corridors of time. Scholars agree that his success as an imperial ruler owed much to his form of government, balancing central administration with local freedom. His system was retained by subsequent dynasties and served for more than 1,000 years until the Arab conquest of Persia in the seventh century.

The *Cyrus Cylinder* even proclaims such a modern-sounding commitment to religious freedom and justice that, in the 1970s, the shah of Iran called it “the first human rights charter in history.” More likely, according to others, it resembles modernity in a different form, as a puffed-up piece of propaganda. But Iran still sees it as a foundation stone of national identity.

The memory of Cyrus lives on at his supposed burial site near Shiraz in southern Iran. The tomb, standing on a rock plinth, is close to the ruins of Pasargadae, Cyrus' capital until his son Cambyses changed it to Susa. There is no hard evidence that it really is his tomb, but if it is – and the same as the one honoured two centuries after his burial by Alexander – it bore a long-gone inscription that read: “Passer-by, I am Cyrus, who gave the Persians an empire, and was king of Asia. Grudge me not therefore this monument.” ○

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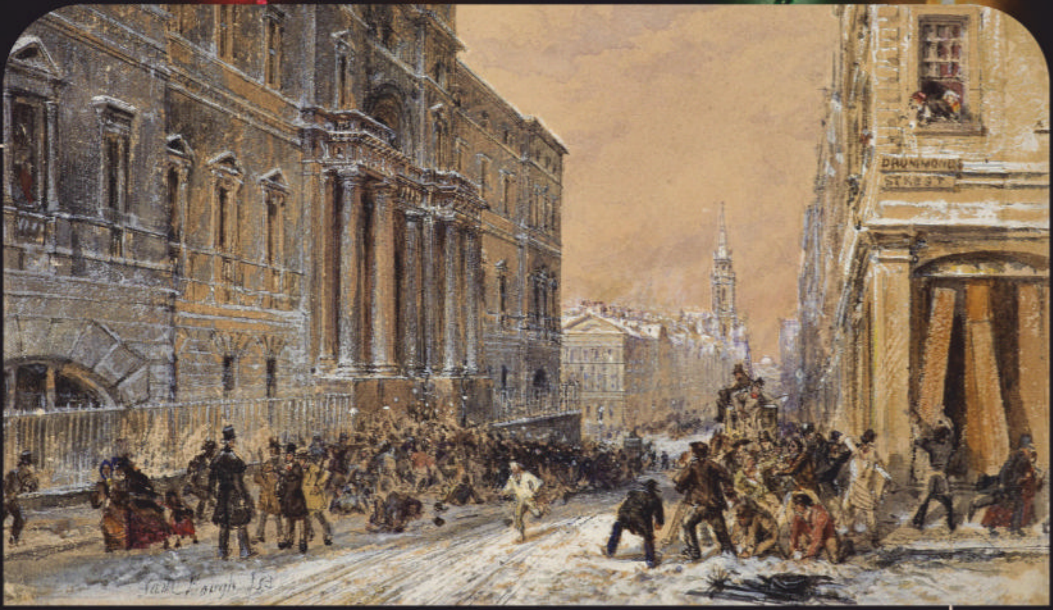
JINGLE HELL

TEN DARK STORIES FROM CHRISTMASES PAST

Written by Callum McKelvie

Santa, sleigh rides, snowmen – what does Christmas mean to you? Likely it inspires feelings of joy, comfort, warm cozy nights under the glow of the Christmas tree and delicious feasts with your loved ones. Yet seasonal celebrations to close out the year have been around in one form or another for centuries and during that time not every Christmas has been white – some have been rather bloody indeed.

From a 10th-century Bohemian king whose violent death ensured he lived on in a popular carol, to a snowball fight that only ended with military intervention and the must-have 1980s Christmas toy that led to widespread rioting, these are just a few examples of the darker side of the festive season. Here, for your macabre reading pleasure, we present ten tales from Christmases past where things were not quite so holly-jolly. So buckle up and prepare for a 'slay' ride into jingle hell...



EDINBURGH SNOWBALL RIOTS

HOW WINTER FRIVOLITY TURNED INTO ALL-OUT WAR

Scotland, 1838

The tradition of a wintery snowball fight is an image often associated with Christmas. However, in Edinburgh in 1838 the high-spirited fun quickly descended into carnage. It began on 11 January outside the Old College when students from the university and local tradesmen began hurling snowballs at each other. Harmless enough – until stones were placed inside, resulting in numerous windows being broken.

The police were able to put a stop to the initial skirmish, but over the coming days it flared up again – only this time the students armed themselves with weapons. Seeing no other way to end the chaos, the lord provost (the city's civic leader) requested military assistance and troops descended upon the city. What had begun with snowballs ended with the army.

In the aftermath five students were placed on trial in a court case that was more complex than it might initially seem. The students were motivated by the desire to keep the university quadrangle out of the local police and magistrate jurisdiction; the locals, on the other hand, were motivated by the age-old resentment of privilege. The students were eventually acquitted.

THE GRUESOME DEMISE OF GOOD KING WENCESLAS

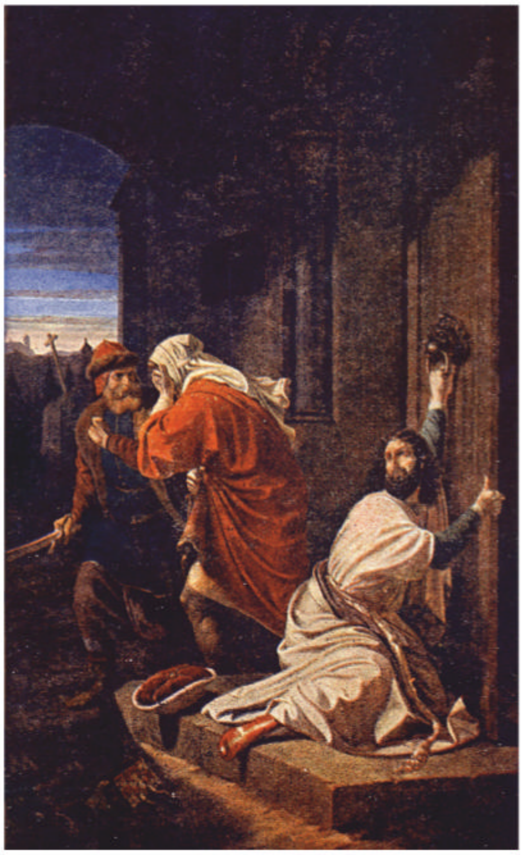
HOW THE FIGURE IN A FAVOURITE CAROL MET A GRISLY END AT THE HANDS OF HIS BROTHER

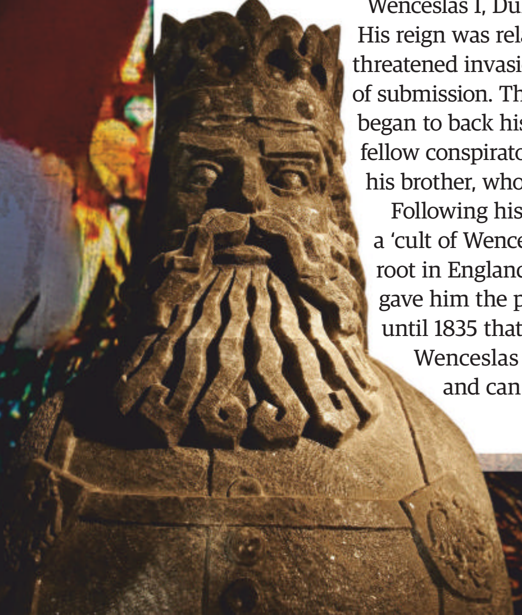
Bohemia, 935

We all know the song about how Good King Wenceslas travels through the harsh winter to help a poor peasant on the Feast of Stephen, but what do you know about the real 10th century duke of Bohemia? The historical figure who inspired the famous Christmas carol and suffered a grisly fate at the hands of his power-hungry brother?

Wenceslas I, Duke of Bohemia, took control of the country in 921. His reign was relatively peaceful until German King Henry Fowler threatened invasion and the duke was forced to carry out an act of submission. This proved too much for some to bear and they began to back his brother, Boleslav. One night, Boleslav and some fellow conspirators attacked the duke, the fatal blow delivered by his brother, who finished him off with a lance.

Following his demise, the duke was venerated as a saint and a 'cult of Wenceslas' quickly spread throughout Europe, taking root in England in particular. Holy Roman Emperor Otto I even gave him the posthumous title of king. However, it was not until 1835 that the famous song that refers to him as Good King Wenceslas appeared. Today, it remains a seasonal favourite and can be heard at carol services across the globe.





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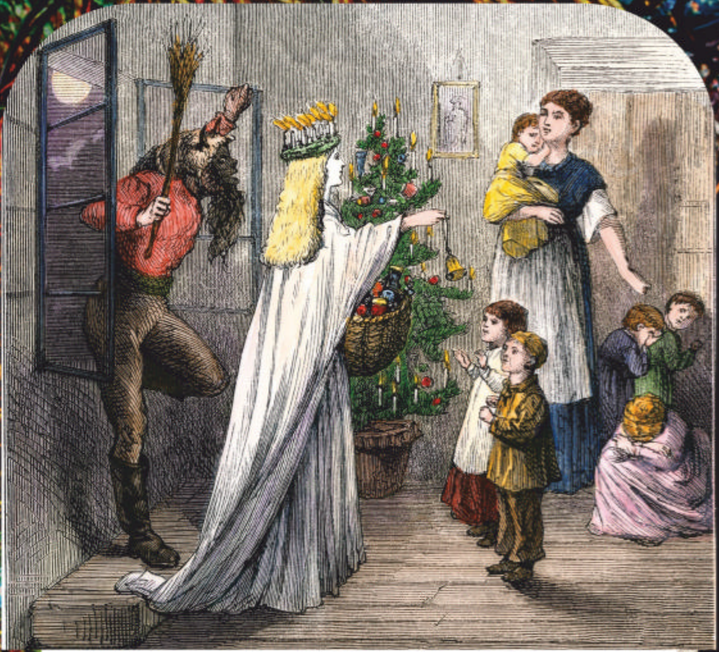


THE KNIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

THIS MEDIEVAL KNIGHT'S CRUEL MISDEEDS SAW HIM TRANSFORMED INTO A SEASONAL BOGEYMAN

France, c.1450 – 1503

There is plenty of folklore concerning the Christmas period, but one frequently overlooked story is that of Hans Trapp, originating from Alsace in France. The tale is said to have been based on the real-life cruelty of medieval knight Hans von Trotha.

In 1480 Von Trotha took up residence in Berwartstein Castle, which was formally owned by the monks and abbot of Weissenburg – who would not hand it over quietly. Von Trotha became so enraged with them that he breached a dam and flooded the entire town. As punishment, he was formally excommunicated and he died two years later.

Over the years, gruesome stories about Von Trotha spread, describing how he'd sold his soul to the devil, and in the tales he soon metamorphosed into the horrific figure of Hans Trapp. This fearsome creature was said to accompany the Christkind (Christmas Maiden), an ethereal teenage girl who rewarded good children. Trapp, on the other hand, was there to be the stick to the Christkind's carrot, punishing naughty boys and girls. He was said to dress in dishevelled, worn-out clothes, giving him the appearance of a scarecrow.

DEADLY GIFT GIVING

HOW A MURDEROUS PRESENT LED TO ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LEGAL CASES OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

United States, 1898

Giving presents is a tradition that can be traced back to the Roman festival of Saturnalia, yet what would you do if the gift you unwrapped on Christmas morning turned out to be deadly? That was the situation Henry Cornish found himself in when a small parcel addressed to him arrived at the Knickerbocker Athletic Club in Brooklyn on 24 December 1898.

The package contained Bromo-Seltzer, a rudimentary form of antacid, which Cornish's cousin Katherine Adams took to aid a headache. She immediately became ill and died shortly afterwards. When the attending doctor tried some of the medicine himself, it became apparent the substance was not Bromo-Seltzer, but potassium cyanide.

Realising it was he and not Adams who had been the intended victim, Cornish immediately suspected his rival, Roland Molineux. The killing of fellow club member Henry Barnet was quickly linked to the case and Molineux was charged with murder. Although Molineux was found guilty, he appealed and a new trial was held, only focussing on the Adams case. This time he was acquitted of all crimes and the case established the precedent that a defendant cannot be prosecuted with evidence from a separate crime.

TERRIFYING YULETIDE TALES

ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS STORIES THAT WERE SO HORRIFYING THEY WERE BANNED

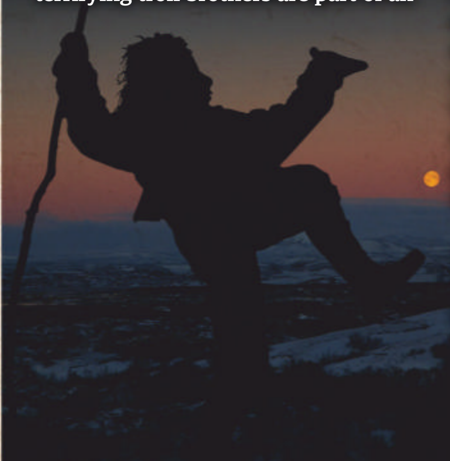
Iceland, 1746

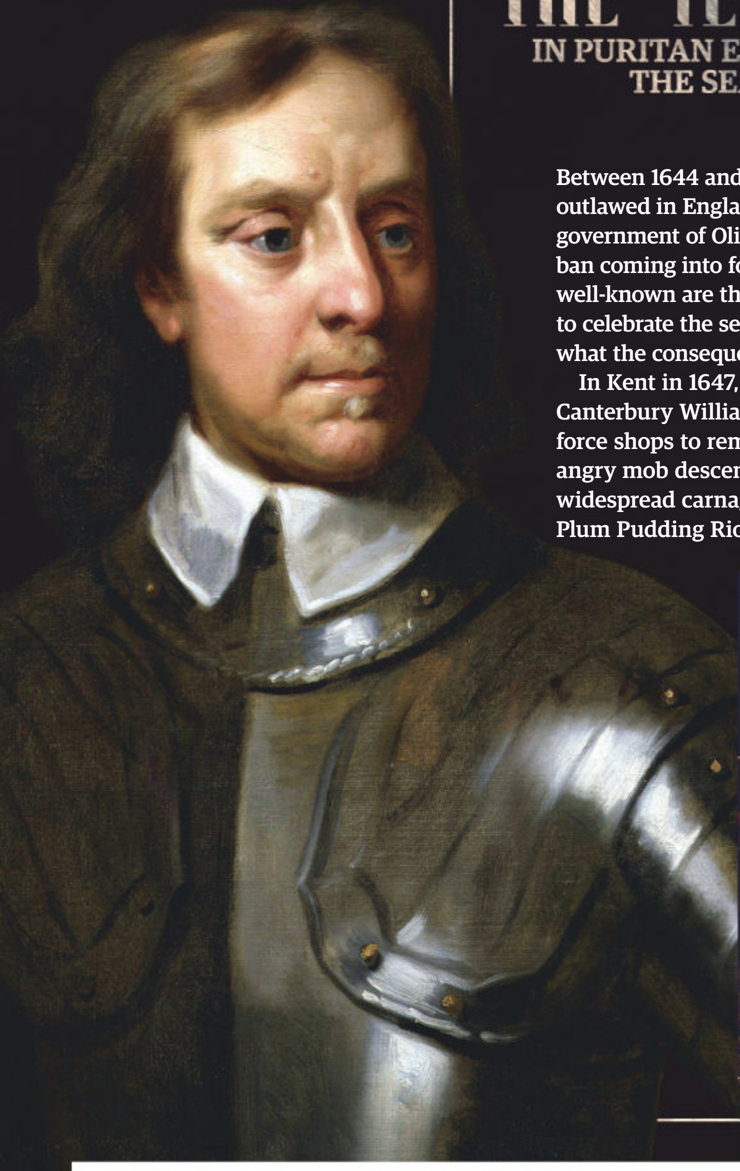
We know that Santa Claus rewards good children, but what happens to the naughty ones? From Austria's Krampus to Pennsylvania's Belsnickel, there are a number of fearsome figures associated with the holiday season. However, in 18th-century Iceland the authorities were forced to step in as some stories proved too frightening for children to handle.

Known as the Yule Lads, these terrifying troll brothers are part of an interconnected series of myths about one gruesome family. The parents Grýla and Leppalúði are huge trolls with a taste for naughty children. They even have a family pet – a gigantic cat known as Jólakötturinn who eats kiddies unfortunate enough not to have received new clothes for the winter.

But it was Grýla and Leppalúði's 13 mischievous sons – the Yule Lads – who were the most feared. Each had distinctive characteristics, their name usually describing their personality traits, such as the Sausage Swiper who liked to steal smoked meats. These stories became so shocking that in 1746 their use to encourage good behaviour from children was officially banned.

The decree condemned "the foolish custom of scaring children with the Yule Lads and ghosts" but it was likely motivated by the perceived anti-Christian origin of the stories. Yet the tales refused to fade and are still recounted in their native land.





THE YEARS WITHOUT CHRISTMAS

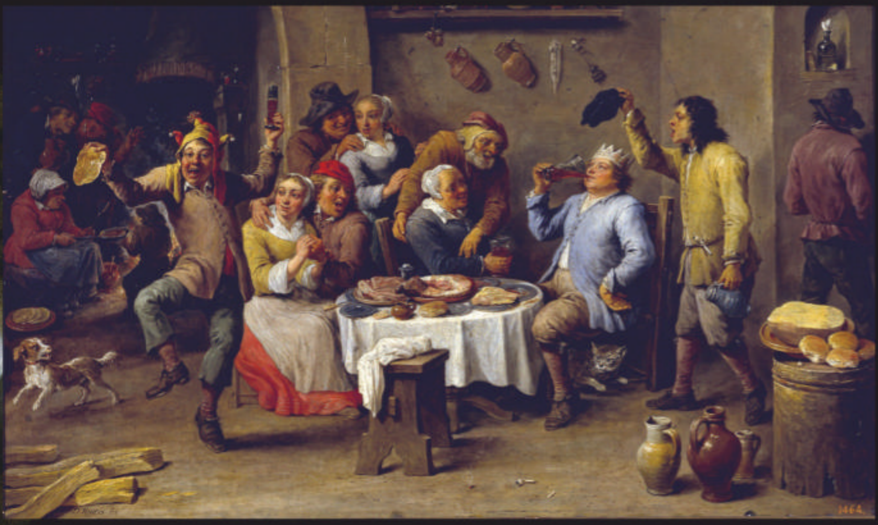
IN PURITAN ENGLAND, THE GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTED TO OUTLAW THE SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS – WITH MIXED RESULTS

England, 1644-60

Between 1644 and 1660, Christmas was outlawed in England by the Puritan government of Oliver Cromwell, with a formal ban coming into force in 1647. What is less well-known are the tales of people who sought to celebrate the seasonal holiday no matter what the consequences.

In Kent in 1647, the Lord Mayor of Canterbury William Bridge decided to force shops to remain open, resulting in an angry mob descending on the streets and widespread carnage, now known as the Plum Pudding Riots. In other years, soldiers could regularly be found patrolling London, confiscating food. Churches who dared to hold Communion were targeted, such as the one attended by diarist John Evelyn in 1657, leading to his arrest.

These various acts of defiance caused the government to introduce further legislation in 1652, with anyone found attending a Christmas Day service or closing their shop subject to a fine. However, even the threat of punishment seemed unable to stop the festivities and by 1657 Christmas was continuing unabated.



THE SANTA CLAUS BANK ROBBERY

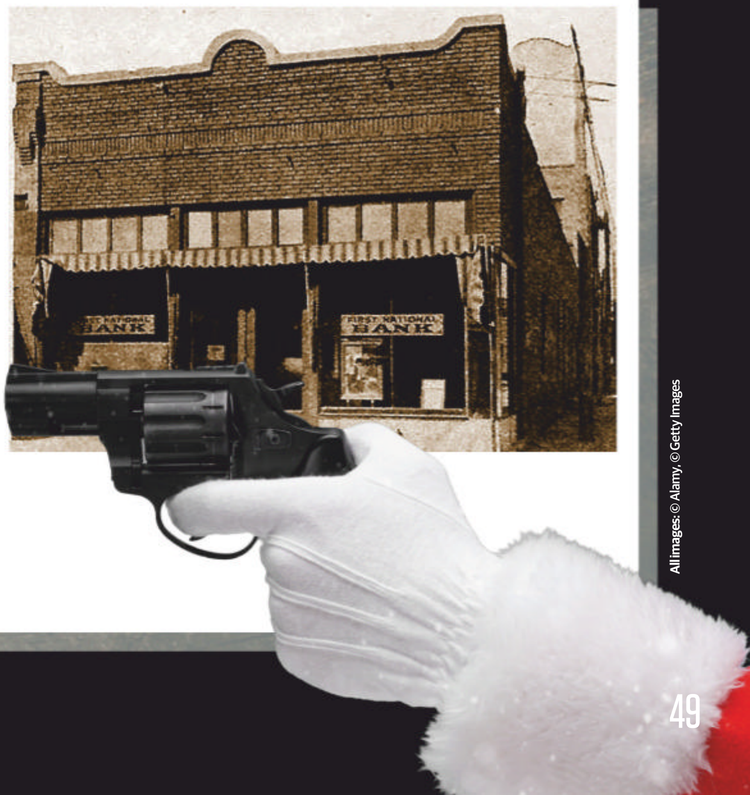
TWO DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS, THE CISCO FIRST NATIONAL BANK RECEIVED A VISIT FROM A VERY BAD SANTA

United States, 1927

On 23 December 1927 Santa Claus came early, but this was not the jolly Saint Nick who delivers presents to all the good boys and girls. A thief named Marshall Ratliff donned the costume as he and three companions attempted to rob the First National Bank in Cisco, Texas. But what should have been a simple bank heist quickly descended into a bloodbath.

At the time Texas was suffering a spate of banks robberies, with three or four being looted every day, and the Texas Bankers Association offered $5,000 to any civilian who shot a thief during an attempted hold-up. As such, as soon as word of the robbery spread, Ratliff and his companions found themselves surrounded by armed civilians, all eager for the $5,000 reward.

A shoot-out erupted and all the robbers were wounded, but they managed to escape. One of Ratliff's accomplices died from his injuries but the other three men were only captured after an extensive manhunt. Following the carnage, over 200 bullet holes were found at the bank.



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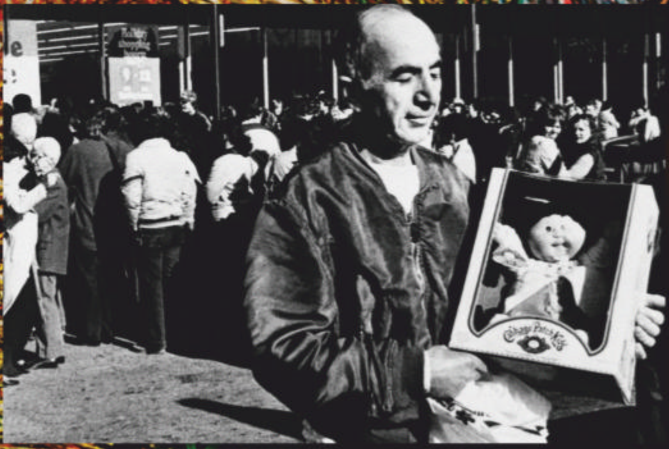


I'm adoptable.

THE CABBAGE PATCH CHRISTMAS CRAZE

RIOTING, LOOTING AND VIOLENCE – ALL TO GET THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS TOY

United States, 1983

Christmas shopping is always a nightmare but during the festive season of 1983 it became downright hellish for many parents as they desperately tried to lay their hands on the must-have toy of the season – a Cabbage Patch Kids doll. Toy company Coleco began manufacturing the dolls in 1982 and had achieved success beyond their wildest dreams. However, Coleco still underestimated demand and concerns quickly spread that there were not enough dolls to ensure every child would be happy come Christmas morning.

The dire situation soon became violent. Thousands were involved in riots at stores across the United States and some staff were forced to defend themselves with baseball bats. In Hills department store in Charleston, South Carolina, 5,000 parents descended upon the startled staff. "They knocked over the display table," manager Scott Belcher told *Time* magazine. "People were grabbing at each other, pushing and shoving. It got ugly."

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a radio DJ joked that a B-29 aircraft was preparing to drop thousands of the dolls at County Stadium, causing dozens to run to the empty sportsground. The riots would later inspire the plot of the 1996 Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle *Jingle All The Way*, in which he finds himself in similar toy-centred mayhem.

Cabbage Patch Kids

MARAUDING MUMMERS

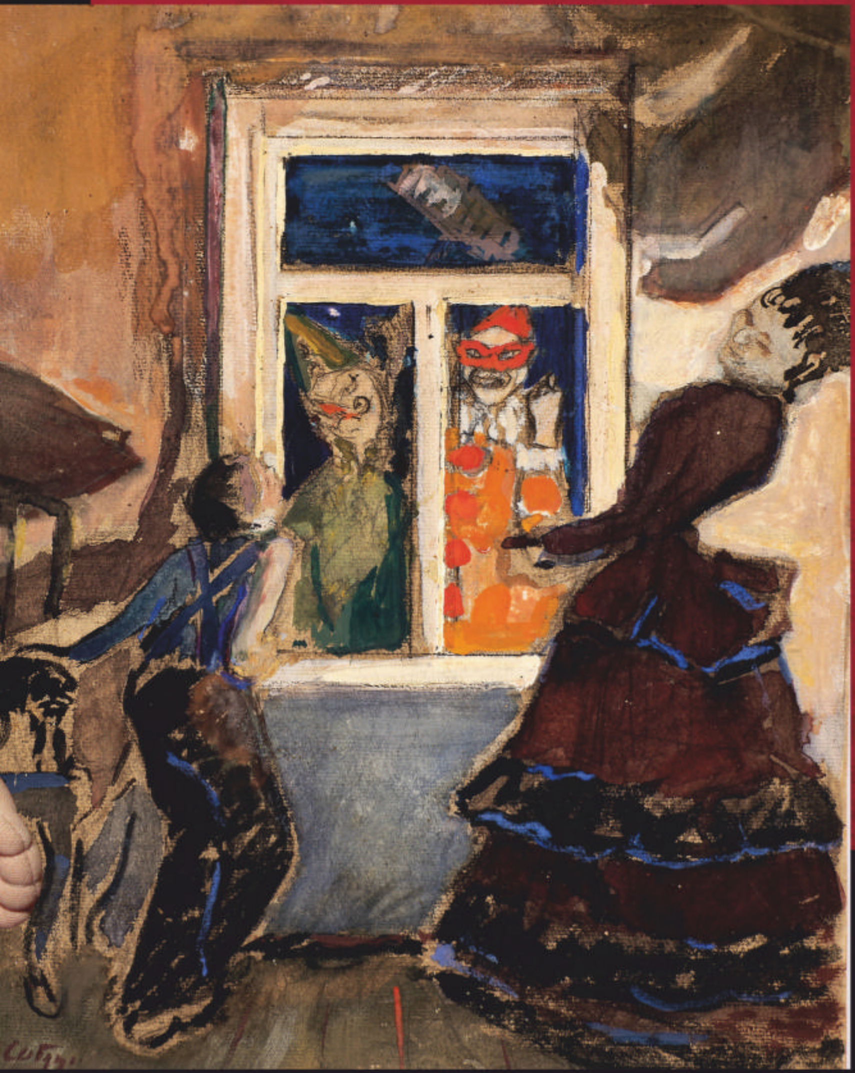
HOW CHRISTMAS REVELRY TURNED VIOLENT AND ENDED IN A FATALITY

Newfoundland, 1860

Mummering, a Christmas tradition related to contemporary carolling, was popular in many parts of the world, particularly in 19th century Newfoundland. The custom involved masked revellers visiting houses and performing songs in return for alcohol and food. However, by the middle of the century it had developed a violent streak, with gangs of revellers ambushing individuals in the street. In 1860, the boisterous behaviour of one group of masked mummers went even further and ended in tragedy.

One December night, Isaac Mercer was afraid to take the walk home alone should the Mummers attack. Despite convincing his brothers-in-law to walk with him, the group was set upon by half-a-dozen of the masked 'revellers'. During the skirmish, it's said that Mercer was clubbed over the head with his own hatchet. He died from his injuries later that night.

It's said there might have been religious or even financial motivations behind the attack, yet no one was ever brought to justice and exactly what occurred that night remains a mystery. Two years after Mercer's death, Mumming was made illegal and remained so for over 100 years.



You've made it through Halloween, now try and survive Christmas.
SILENT NIGHT DEADLY NIGHT
He knows when you've been naughty

SANTA'S CINEMATIC NIGHTMARE

THE FILM *SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT* SAW ENRAGED PARENTS TAKE TO THE STREETS

United States, 1984

Several cinematic classics are associated with the holiday season, such as *It's A Wonderful Life* and *The Muppet Christmas Carol*. But it's not just heartwarming family favourites that have brought Yuletide to the big screen. Since the 1970s horror movies have used Christmas iconography to critique the commercialisation of the holiday season – but 1984's *Silent Night, Deadly Night* proved to be a step too far.

The concern seemed to stem from the fact that the film depicted a serial killer wearing a Santa Claus costume, despite another film *Christmas Evil* including the same gimmick with comparatively little upset in its home country (although it was seized as a so-called 'video nasty' in the United Kingdom).

The *Silent Night, Deadly Night* controversy was made worse when a short TV spot for the film was accidentally aired between showings of *Little House on the Prairie* – leaving one woman's three-year-old daughter sobbing for days. The result was hordes of concerned parents picketing screenings of the film across the United States. Despite (or perhaps because of) the controversy, *Silent Night, Deadly Night* continues to be beloved by horror fans, with four sequels and a 2012 remake, and another remake due for release in 2025.

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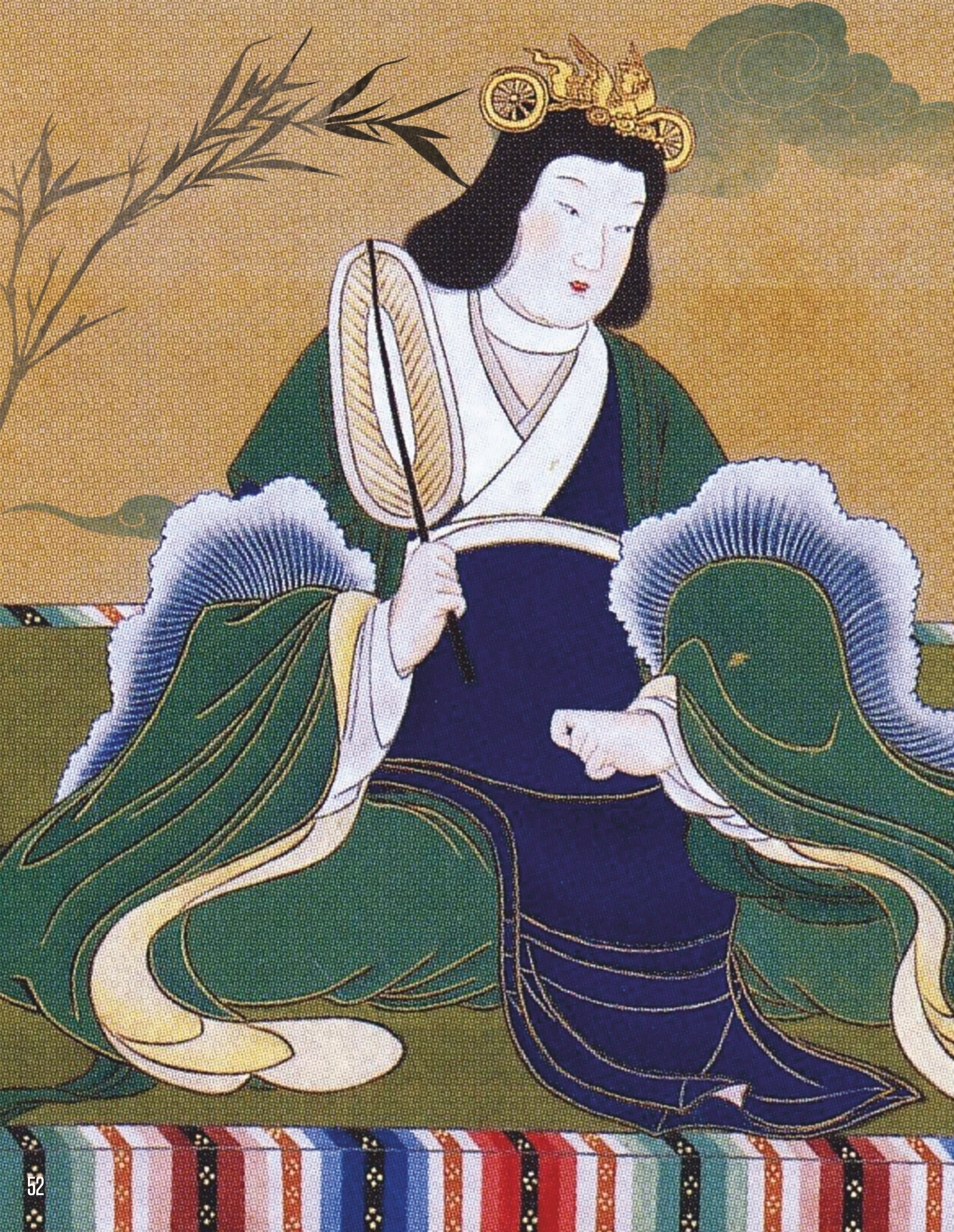

Empresses of Japan

Written by Elizabeth Norton

The Land of the Rising Sun's eight female rulers are all but forgotten, but their lives and reigns were filled with drama

Japan's imperial history stretches back at least 1,500 years in an unbroken line of descent, with the throne passing seamlessly from father to son, uncle to nephew. What is frequently not appreciated, however, is that among the seemingly endless line of male emperors eight women have sat on Japan's Chrysanthemum Throne, ruling in their own right over the country's estimated 14,000 islands.

Suiko, the first Tenno

To find the first, and possibly the greatest of these female emperors, we have to go back almost to the beginning of Japan's recorded history. Suiko, who was the daughter, wife and sister of emperors, was surprisingly selected for the throne in 592 when she was around 40 years old. She was, probably, a compromise candidate and one that her ministers hoped to control. Yet she proved to be a remarkable ruler, promoting Buddhism, which she was passionate about, as well as patronising the earliest chronicles written in Japanese. All Japanese monarchs are given posthumous names, by which they become known to history, with Suiko, which means 'Conjecture of the Past', reflecting her interest in history.

Politically, Suiko was a force to be reckoned with, receiving embassies from China, Korea and India during her reign and corresponding with China's emperor as an equal (addressing her correspondence to the "Emperor of the West" from the "Emperor of the East"). It's fitting that Suiko was the first Japanese sovereign to adopt the title of Tenno, which has been applied to all Japanese monarchs ever since, while her reign of over 35 years remains one of the longest of any Japanese monarch. Even a very grudging early chronicler who made his dislike of female rule plain noted that "the state was well governed under Suiko".

Powerful early empresses

Suiko set such a positive precedent for female rule that in the 178 years between 592 and 770, half of Japan's emperors were female. Kōgyoku ascended the throne in 641, only 13 years after Suiko's death. Her reign was marred by a political assassination carried out in her presence by one of her sons, forcing her abdication in favour of her brother. She was, however, ▶

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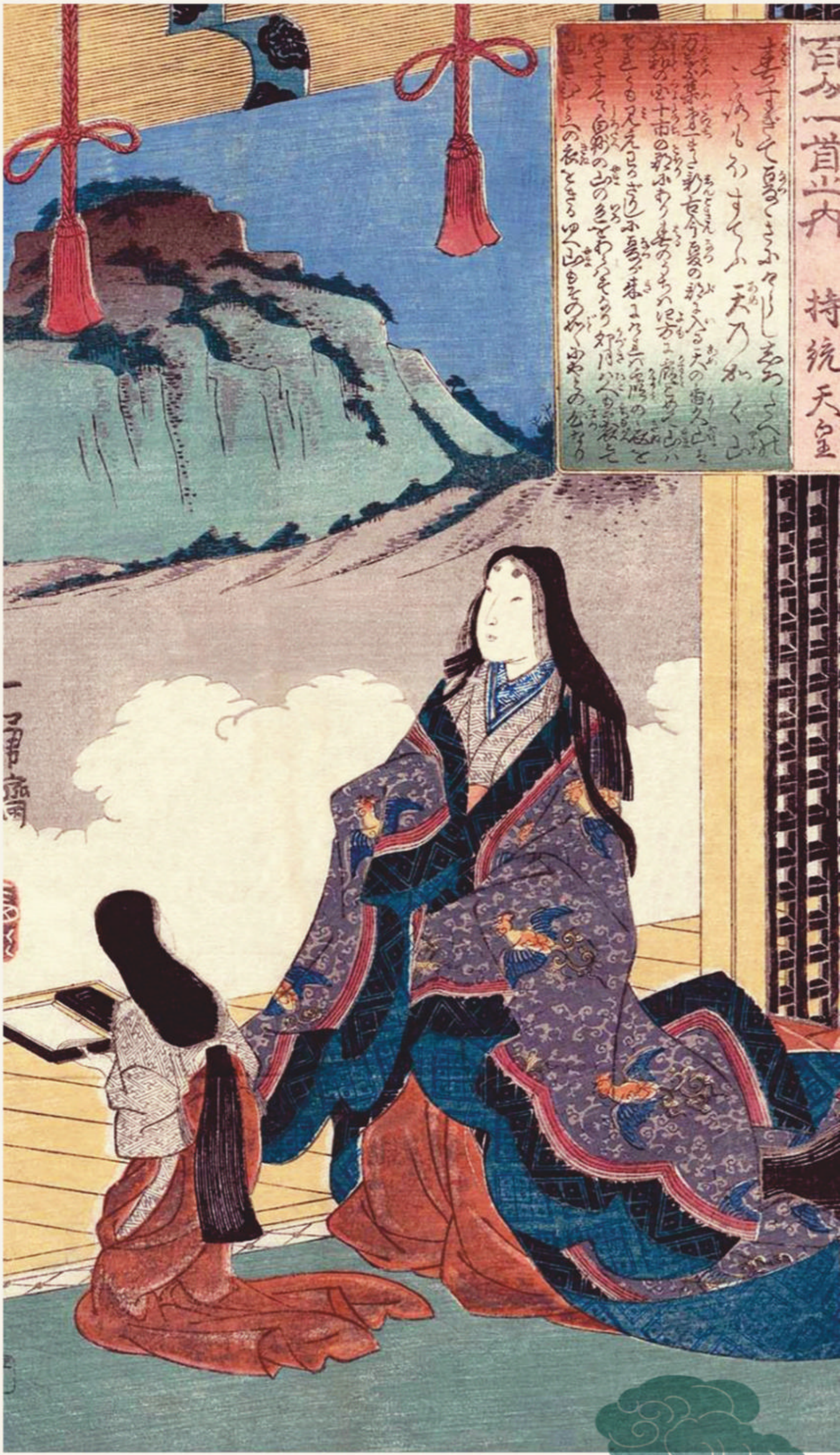
Japan's ninth reigning empress?

Princess Aiko, Emperor Naruhito's only child, may be a possible future empress

Princess Aiko, whose birth in December 2001 was highly anticipated, is the only child of Emperor Naruhito and his wife Empress Masako. While her sex was thought to be a disappointment, a poll taken at the time of Aiko's birth indicated that 86 percent of Japanese people were in favour of bringing women back into the succession. Even Aiko's 90-year-old great-aunt, Princess Takamatsu, declared in an article written to celebrate the birth that "it is possible that an imperial princess will ascend the throne as the 127th emperor."

By the time that Princess Aiko started kindergarten at the famous Gakushūin School in Tokyo, there were only six people in the world with a claim to the Japanese throne, with an average age of nearly 60. As a result, the prime minister instituted an Advisory Council to consider the future of the monarchy, with it clear that they favoured naming Aiko as heir. But then, on 6 September 2006, less than a year after the council made their report, Princess Kiko, the wife of Aiko's uncle, gave birth to a son. For now, Aiko, who is a popular member of the royal family and regularly carries out royal engagements, will lose her royal status when she marries. It is, however, not impossible that – should things change – she will one day rule as Japan's ninth reigning empress.


百人一首之内
持統天皇

able to consolidate her position to such an extent that, in 654, she returned to the throne, with her second regnal name Empress Saimei. This second reign was rather less eventful than her first, with the empress dying in 661 at the age of 60.

The troubles of Kōgyoku-Saimei's reign were clearly not prejudicial to other women wearing the imperial crown. Her granddaughter, Jito, claimed the throne in 686 on the death of her uncle-husband, Emperor Tenmu. Jito had been raised by Kōgyoku and had been a highly powerful consort, before seamlessly morphing into the most powerful emperor that Japan had hitherto seen, consolidating power into her own hands. Jito's reign came in the midst of a fascinating time of female power in Asia, with her accession coinciding with that of Wu Zetian, China's only female emperor, while the kingdom of Silla on the Korean peninsula had also only recently witnessed two reigning queens in turn, Sondok and Chindok. There was considerable contact between Japan, China and the kingdoms of Korea in this early period, with the stories of these female rulers passing backwards and forwards and undoubtedly helping to bolster the position of rulers who remained, due to their sex, an anomaly.

Jito, who is remembered as a poet as well as a political leader, abdicated in favour of her grandson, Monmu, when he came of age in 697. While this has been interpreted as Jito merely keeping the throne warm while the true heir grew up, this is far from the case. It has always been common for Japanese sovereigns of either sex to abdicate, with the ex-sovereign often continuing to wield considerable power. This was very much the case with Jito, who remained the power behind the throne until her death in 703.

Japan only had to wait a decade after Jito's abdication for another female sovereign, with her half-sister (and daughter-in-law) Genmei taking the throne on Monmu's death in 707. In order to regularise her rule, Genmei publicly asserted that her father, Emperor Tenji, had ordained on his deathbed that his two daughters, Jito and Genmei, should reign after him, but Japan was already becoming increasingly used to the idea of a woman on the throne. Genmei certainly did not disappoint. She established the country's first capital city, settling upon Nara, around 300km southwest of Tokyo. The building of the city, which was laid out in streets of wide boulevards, with Chinese-style palaces and temples, was overseen by the empress, who was the first to settle the highly mobile royal court in one place.

Like that of Suiko before her, Genmei's reign is remembered for its literary achievements, with the empress commissioning a young scholar, Ō no Yasumaro, to write the first work of Japanese history that still survives. His book, the *Kojiki*, tellingly ends with the reign of Empress Suiko, while he also praises Genmei for her virtue which, he says, "reaches to the utmost limits of the horse's hoof-marks." Genmei had probably never intended to rule until the end of her life, abdicating in favour of her daughter Genshō in 715 in the only Japanese instance of female-to-female succession. Genshō abdicated in turn in 724, passing the throne to her nephew Shomu. ▶

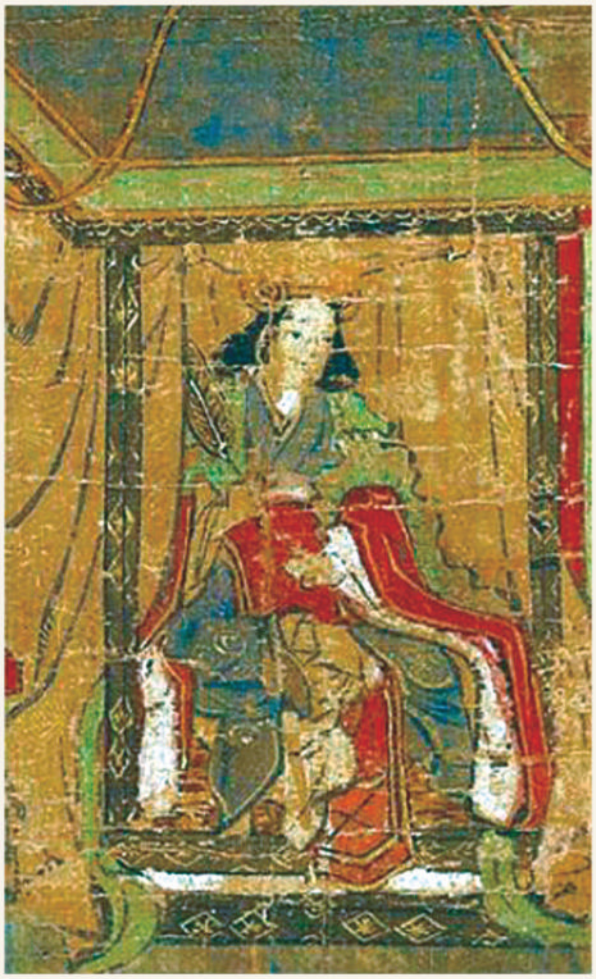
LEFT Empress Jito was also a renowned poet. She is depicted here with a verse attributed to her

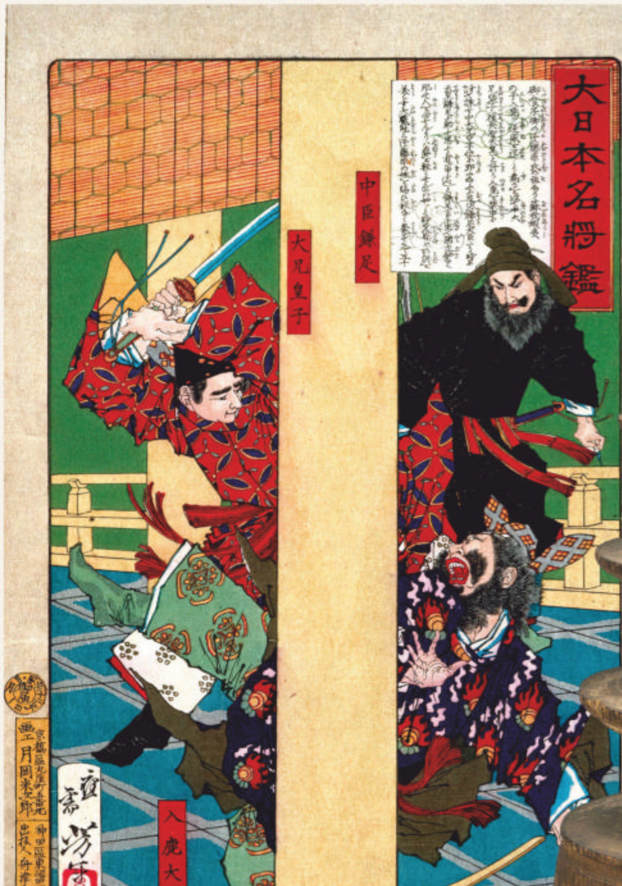
BELOW-LEFT An early depiction of Suiko (r.593-628), Japan's first reigning empress, who promoted Buddhism and literature

BELOW-MIDDLE The assassination of her minister, Soga no Iruka, in Kōgyoku's presence by one of her sons, led to the end of her first reign

BELOW-RIGHT A devout Buddhist, Kōken ordered one million small wooden pagodas, each containing a printed sutra, to be sent out into Japan as an act of devotion

> "Politically, Suiko was a force to be reckoned with, receiving embassies from China, Korea and India during her reign"




大日本名将鑑
中臣鎌足
大兄皇子
入鹿大臣

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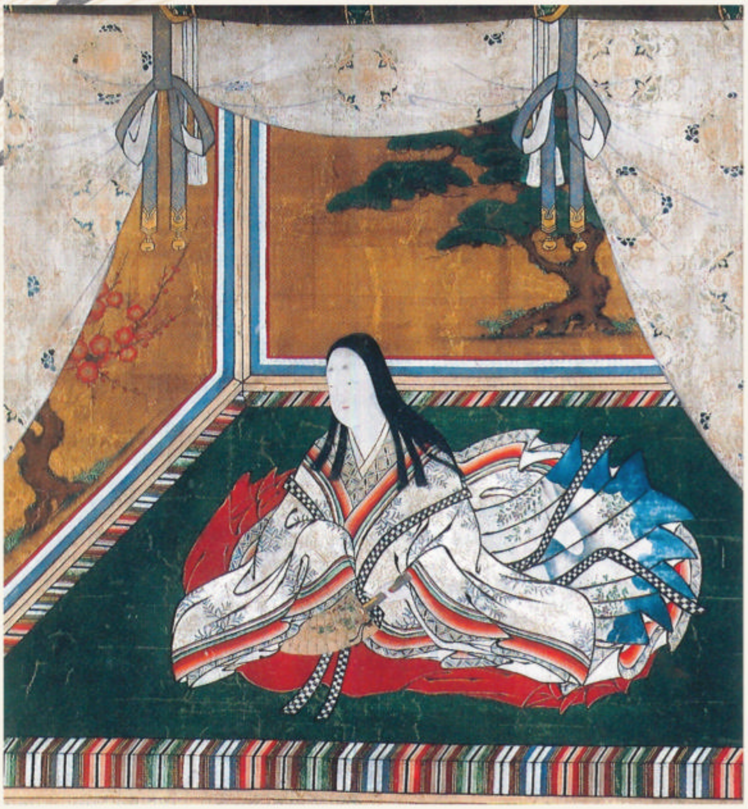
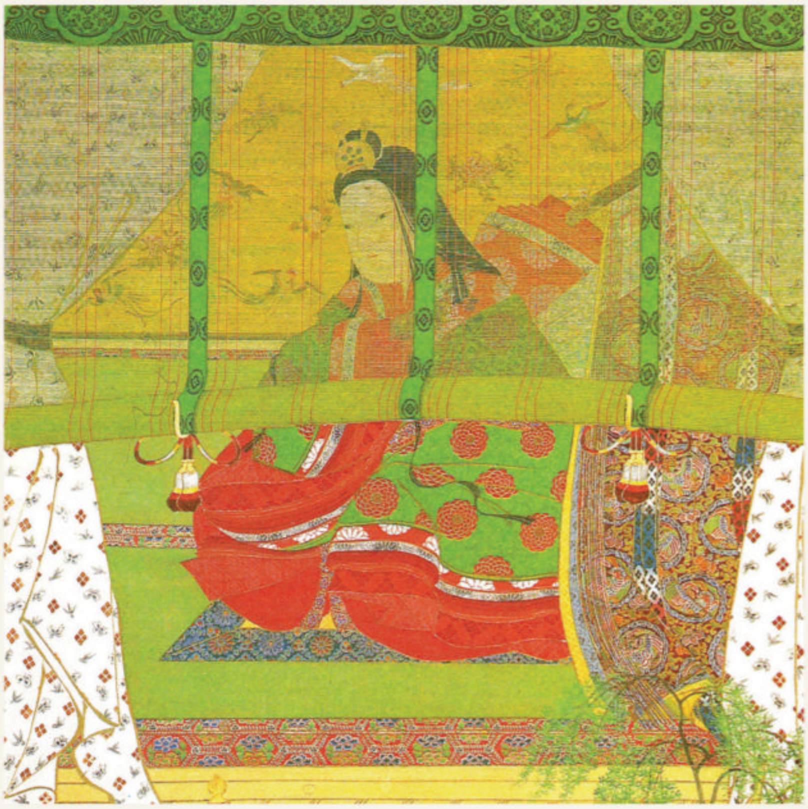




ABOVE-LEFT Empress Genshō is the only female empress to have succeeded a woman on the throne

ABOVE-RIGHT Kōken is the most notorious of all of Japan's reigning empresses. She reigned twice, taking the throne for a second time as Empress Shōtoku

An empress-nun

Abdication was not limited to female rulers, with Shomu passing the throne to his daughter Kōken in 749 after a 25-year reign, and retiring to a monastery. Both father and daughter were devoted to Buddhism, with Kōken intent on uniting the faiths of Japan, something that was highly controversial. Early in her reign, she announced that the statue of the ancient Shinto god Hachiman in his shrine in Usa in the far south of Japan was to be installed as a Great Bodhisattva in Nara, adopting him into her preferred faith. During the enthronement ceremony, attended both by Kōken and her retired father, the characters for 'world peace' were observed to have miraculously appeared on the palace walls. It was a triumph for the empress, but it's clear that her religious policies were not universally popular. In 757 a Shinto priest and priestess who had been involved in the translation of the god attempted to assassinate her. Amid growing pressure, she was forced to abdicate the following year, taking her vows as a Buddhist nun.

Yet this was not the last Japan was to hear of Kōken, who refused to retire quietly to her convent, retaining her own powerbase and an army of retainers. By 762 she was powerful enough to declare that she would rule Japan from her convent, while her successor was to carry out only the ceremonial function of monarchy. In the face of a revolt by this emperor's supporters, Kōken used her troops to take back the throne, exiling her successor to Awaji Island, where he died under suspicious circumstances the following year. His memory was so denigrated that it would be more than 1,000 years before he was granted a posthumous regnal name.

Like her distant predecessor, Kōgyoku, Kōken is known by a new regnal name, Shōtoku, during her second period of rule. The first matter to deal with was her status, since Japan had never had a sovereign who had taken holy orders before ("the most unusual of developments," according to one early chronicler). As a result, she issued an edict, declaring that "although our head has been shaven and we wear Buddhist robes, we feel obliged to consult the government of the nation." She continued her religious policies, famously sending one million small wooden pagodas containing printed Buddhist texts out into the farthest reaches of Japan as an act of devotion. Kōken's second reign was not a success, with the empress noted to be under the influence of a monk named Dōkyō, who was rumoured to be her lover. It would be nearly 900 years before Japan would have another female sovereign after her death in 770.

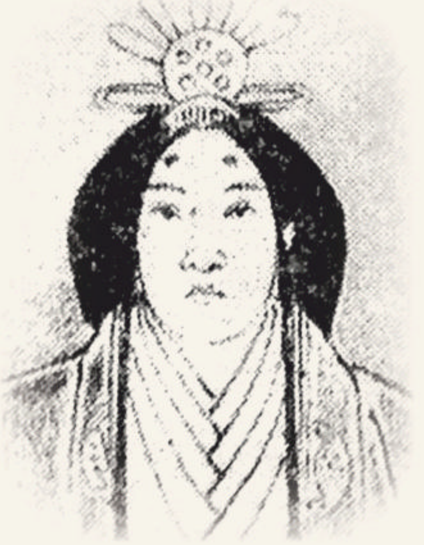
> "Jito's reign came in the midst of a fascinating time of female power in Asia"

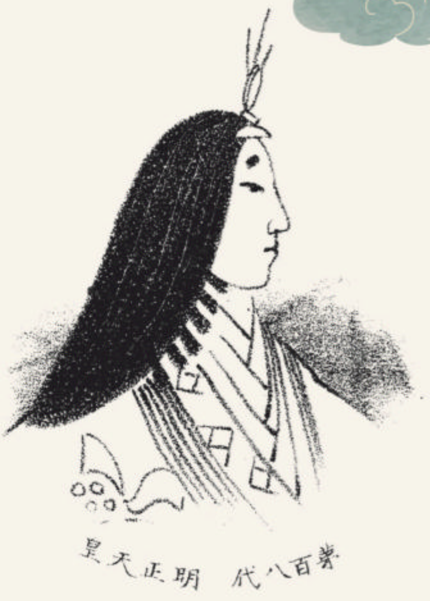
Japan's final female emperors

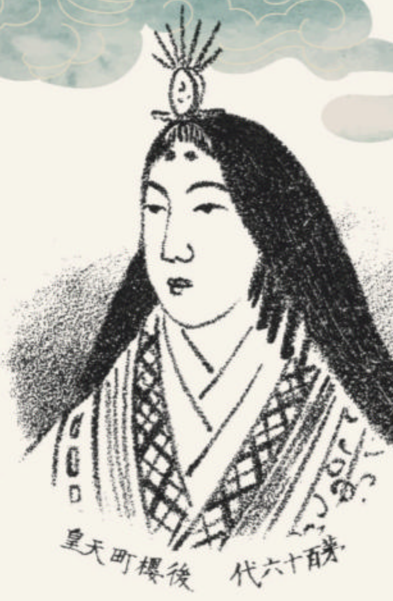
Japan's seventh female sovereign existed in an entirely different world to that of her female predecessors. The power of the emperors has always ebbed and flowed, with the monarch a mere figurehead by the early 17th century, with real political power lying with the shogun – a military title whose holder was frequently mistaken for the monarch by misinformed foreigners.

By the early 17th century Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada, who dominated from his capital of Edo (now Tokyo), was the true ruler of Japan. He was princely in appearance, according to one Spanish visitor to his court, but he was not of royal blood, something that he attempted to rectify with the marriage of his daughter Kazuko to the unwilling Emperor Go-Mizunoo.

This was an outrageous breach of protocol, with it being clear that the shogun was looking to place a grandson on the throne. He was, however, outplayed by his royal son-in-law, who abruptly abdicated in December 1629 before Kazuko could produce a son. In order to ensure his continued dominance, Hidetada was forced to place his five-year-old granddaughter on the throne instead, resurrecting the idea of female rule after more than eight centuries. In a direct reference to this ancient history, the seventh






第百十六代 後櫻町天皇

ABOVE-LEFT
Genmei, the fourth of Japan's empresses, founded its first capital city Nara

ABOVE-MIDDLE
Meisho was the first female empress in nearly 900 years, taking the throne in 1629 as a child

ABOVE-RIGHT
Go-Sakuramachi, the last female emperor. Reigning in the shogun period, she had little real power

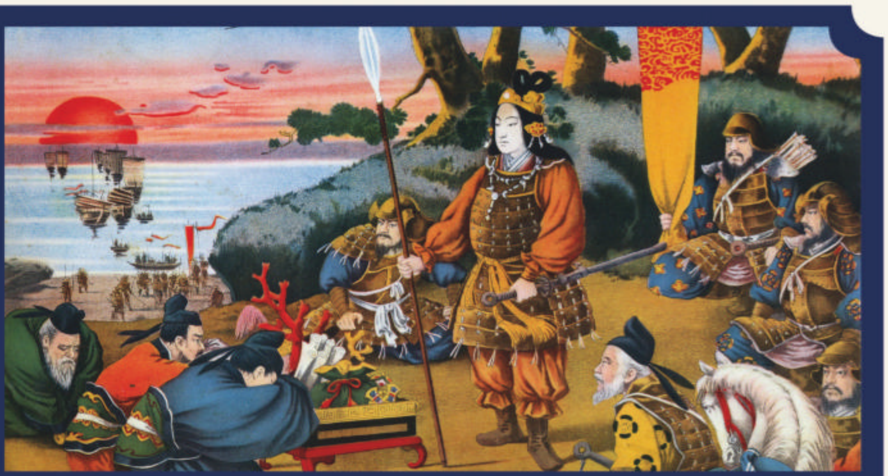
empress's throne name, bestowed by convention posthumously, is Meisho, a name made up of the final characters of the names of her illustrious predecessors Genmei and Genshō. Meisho, unlike these distant ancestors, had no power. But, then, neither did the male emperors of the period. On the instructions of her father, she abdicated in 1643 at the age of 19 and retired to a convent.

Meisho's reign, although largely uneventful, did at least re-establish the precedent of female rule, with Go-Sakuramachi succeeding to the throne in 1762 following the sudden death of her brother. She, too, reigned in the age of the shoguns and had very little in the way of actual power, abdicating in favour of a nephew after nine years on the throne. This cultured, highly educated woman, who remained active in Kyoto society in the decades of her retirement, was the last woman to reign in Japan. In 1867 the reforming Emperor Meiji, who found the idea of female rule offensive, barred women from the throne, a position that remains to this day. The current Emperor Naruhito has only one child, Princess Aiko, but unlike the eight women who went before her, she currently has no possibility of the throne.

Japan's ruling house claims descent from the Sun Goddess of Shintoism, while the country's earliest history, written down in Chinese annals, records an ancient queen, Himiko, as its first known ruler, a monarch so powerful that she was reportedly gifted 100 bronze mirrors from the emperor of China, while she lived in a palace staffed only by female attendants. Himiko may well be a mythical figure, and few would now take the godly descent of Japan's emperors at face value, but the eight women who occupied the Chrysanthemum Throne were undoubtedly real. They are a diverse group – some successful, some remembered poorly, some powerful and others almost powerless, but the mere fact of their reigns adds colour to an imperial line that is otherwise unrelentingly male. At present, there are very few potential male successors to the Japanese throne and it's not impossible that, within a few generations, the law may be changed to see a ninth woman take the throne of her ancestors. Whether she will prove to be a Suiko, a Kōken or a powerless Meisho, remains to be seen.

Empress of legend

How the Empress Jingū story turned bad



Predating the empresses discussed here was one woman whose story has blended into myth and folklore: Empress Jingū. Thought to have been born around 169 CE and dying in 269 CE, she was regent to her son Ōjin following the death of her husband, the 14th emperor, Chūai (r.192-200 CE). From these core details her story starts to veer off into more legendary directions as historical records become hard to verify.

The empress, said to be intelligent and beautiful, is alleged to have had a pair of jewels that gave her control of the tides and with these she led Japan to a bloodless conquest of the Korean peninsula. This was all done with divine guidance and rituals powering her victories. It's also claimed that Ōjin remained in her womb for three years, allowing her to return to Japan to give birth. So why would conquering Korea be problematic? Because this story of Japanese rule of Korea became a powerful propaganda tool in justifying the later invasion of the peninsula by Japanese forces under the Meiji and its annexation in 1910 (ending in 1945). This repressive and violent period in Korean history remains a controversial and inflammatory issue between the nations to this day.

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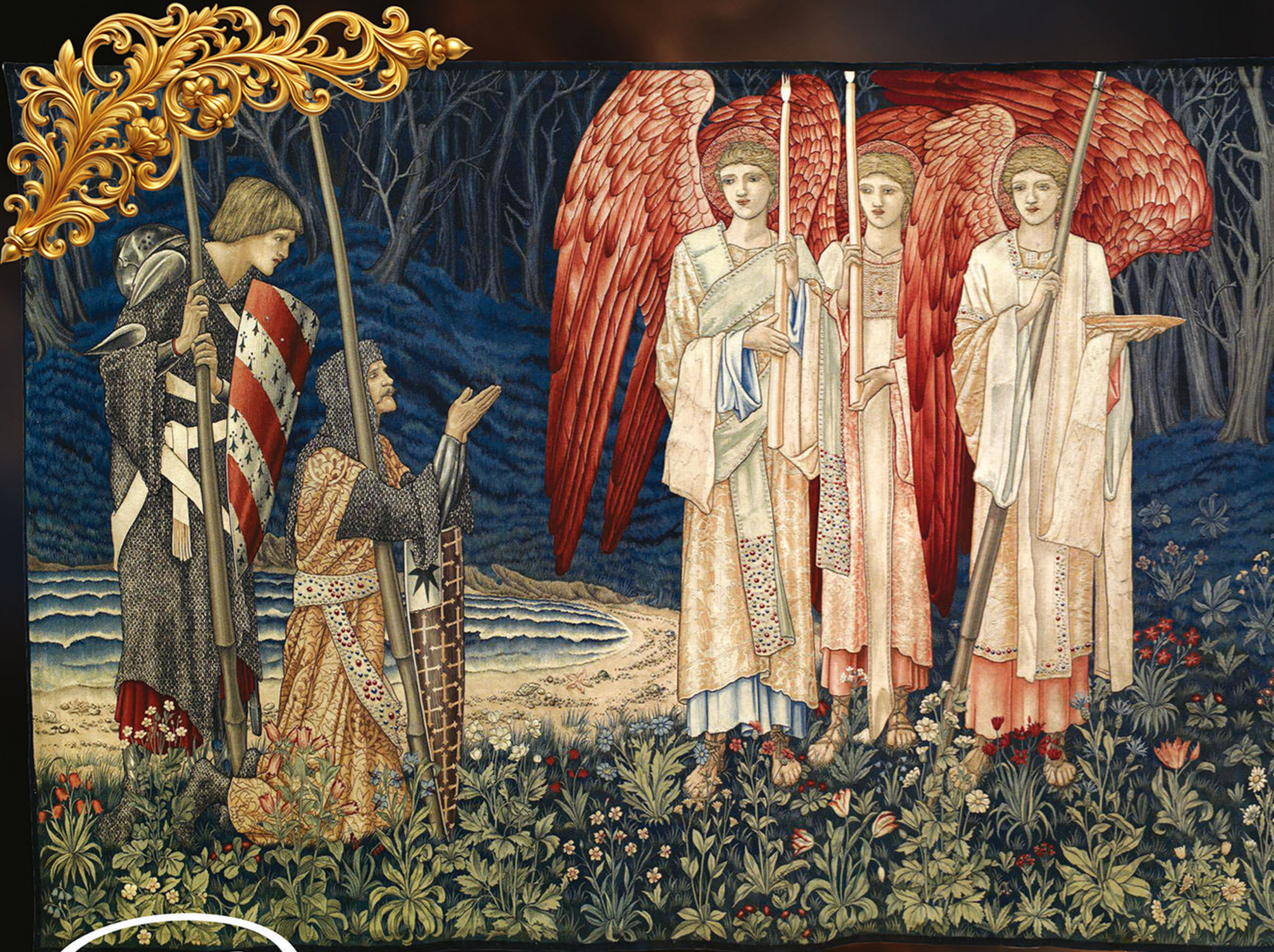
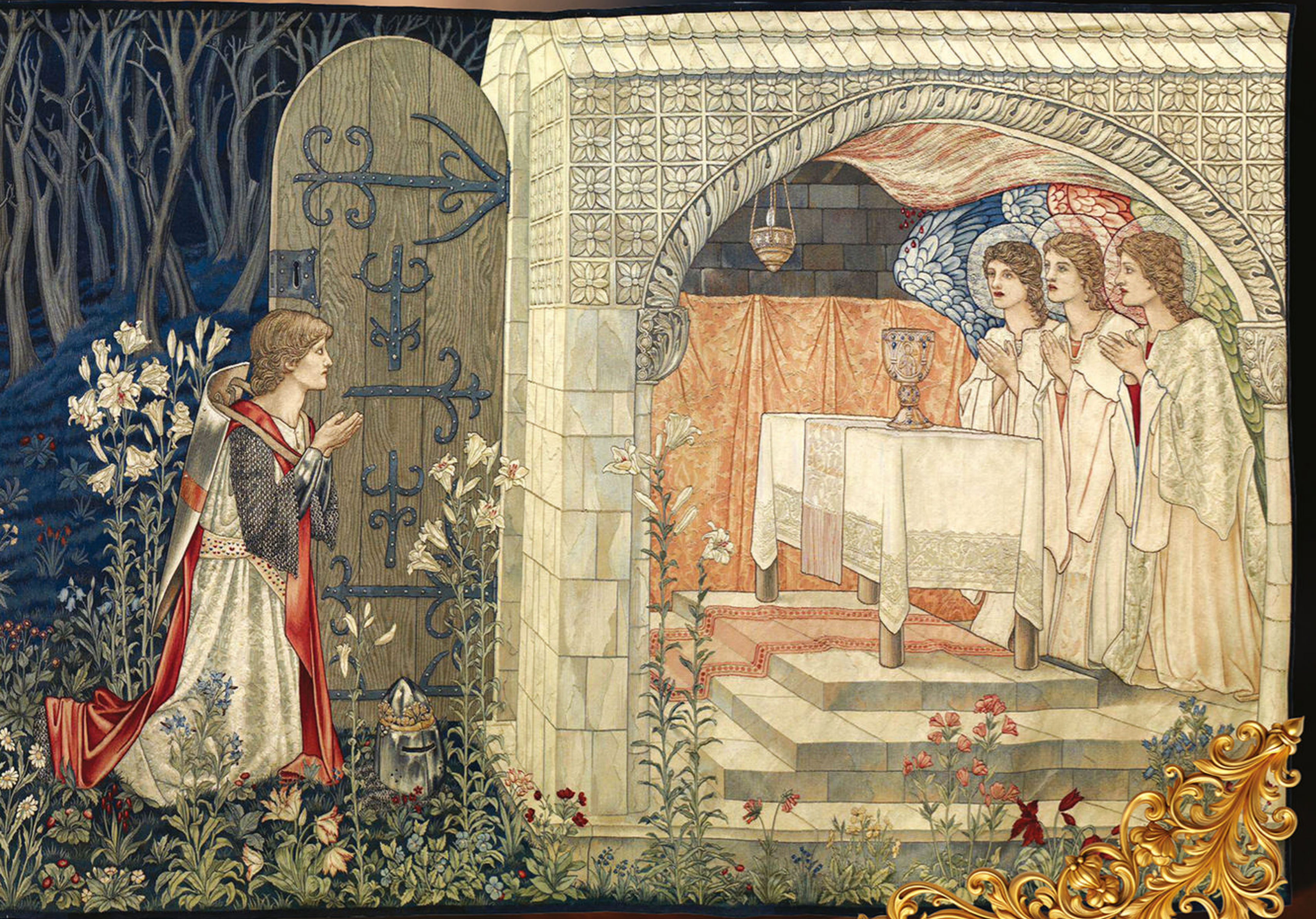
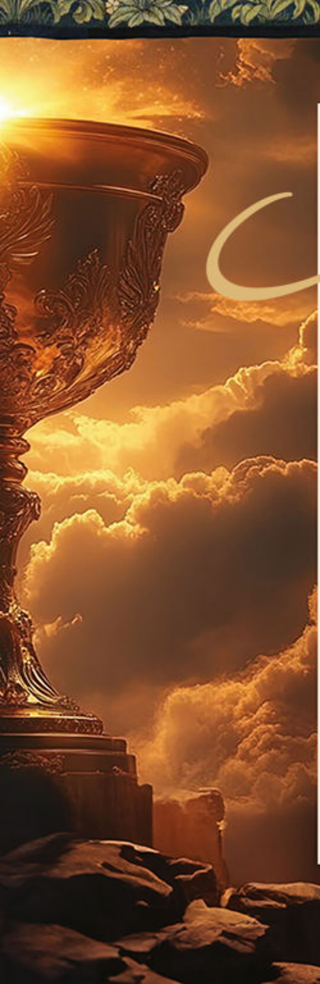


Quest for the HOLY GRAIL

Written by Edoardo Albert

The search for the mythical relic unites the two strongest currents of European spirituality: Christianity and the legends of Arthur and his knights





And He took a cup and when He had given thanks He gave it to them saying: ‘Drink this, all of you.’”

According to St Matthew’s account of the last meal Jesus had with his disciples, these were the words he spoke before being taken prisoner and hauled before Pilate. Mark, Luke and Paul repeat the account in their own ways. The meal, and Jesus’ actions and words during it, became the basis for Christian commemorations of the Last Supper – the Eucharist – in the first century and the following centuries. There was no more significant and holy event in the religion, and the cup into which Jesus poured the wine was seen as the receptacle into which he poured his blood for the salvation of all.

A little later, but still in the first millennium, a body of legends began to form around King Arthur. In the way of popular tales, the stories developed a gravity of their own, sucking other stories into their orbit. In the late 12th century, the French poet Chrétien de Troyes wrote *Perceval, or the Story of the Grail*, which first set a grail – Christian or otherwise – within the body of Arthurian legends.

Another French poet, Robert de Boron, wrote a verse romance of the life of Joseph of Arimathea in which Joseph used the Chalice from the Last Supper to catch some of Jesus’ blood as he hung upon the cross. Joseph then brought the Chalice – or Grail – with him to the vaus d’Avaron, the valleys of Avaron, in the west. Avaron became Avalon, which was equated with Glastonbury in England. Later legends suggested that Joseph had travelled with a young Jesus to England. The Romantic poet William Blake took that story and used it to sanctify his mythical vision of England to spine-tingling effect in *Jerusalem*: “And did those feet in ancient time / Walk upon England’s mountains green? / And was the holy Lamb of God / On England’s pleasant pastures seen?”

The Holy Chalice of the Last Supper and the Holy Grail of Arthurian legend had now met and fused. In their fusion, they produced the most sublime of the Arthurian tales, the great cycle of stories that tell of the quest of the Knights of the Round Table for the Holy Grail. All the knights take part in the quest but only three succeed: Sir Bors, Sir Perceval and the purest knight of all, Sir Galahad.

The Holy Grail is deeply embedded within the European imagination and it still inspires poets and artists to this day. Pilgrims continue to go in search of the cups that are said to be the true relic of the Holy Chalice that Jesus himself held and blessed on that fateful night in Jerusalem.

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Holy Grail: © Adobe Stock/AI Generated

MONASTERY OF SAN JUAN DE LA PEÑA

Location: Santa Cruz de la Serós, Huesca, Spain

While the Holy Chalice is now in the Cathedral of Valencia, the question remains of how it got there. After all, the Spanish city is a long way from ancient Palestine.

According to tradition, the cup was brought to Rome by St Peter himself, where it was used by his successors until increasing persecution meant that it had to be taken from the city and hidden. Pope Sixtus II gave the chalice into the care of his deacon, Lawrence, who fled Rome, eventually arriving in Huesca, the city in Spain where his parents lived.

Details get a little sketchy here, but somehow the chalice ended up under the care of the monks of the monastery of San Juan de la Peña, 50km northeast of Huesca.

The chalice was documented in 1399 when it was given to Martin I of Aragón. It passed to Alfonso the Magnanimous, who placed it in his palace in Valencia in 1424. In 1437, Alfonso gave the chalice to the church. It has been kept at Valencia Cathedral for most of the time since, although it had to be hidden during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) by a brave local family.

CHÂTEAU OF MONTSÉGUR

Location: Montségur, l'Ariège, France

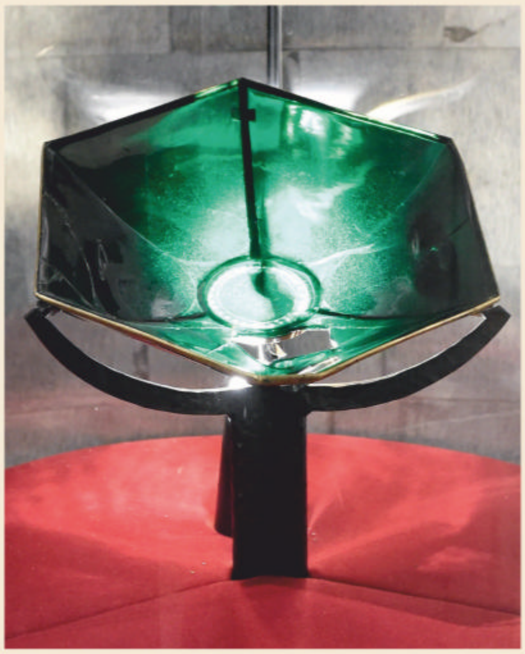
The Château of Montségur, set atop a huge rock outcrop, was the last stronghold of the Cathars, a heretical medieval sect that believed the flesh, and its pleasures, were inherently sinful. In 1244, the last Cathar believers were besieged in the castle for 10 months. When the fortress finally fell, over 200 Cathars were burned for their faith.

However, according to some accounts, before the end a few Cathars managed to slip through the lines of the besiegers with various treasures and secret knowledge. In 1906, French writer Joséphin Péladan first proposed that among these treasures was the Holy Grail. Péladan derived this idea by equating Montségur with Munsalväsche, the castle of the Holy Grail in Wolfram von Eschenbach's medieval chivalric romance poem *Parzival*, and later writers have taken the idea and run with it.

The Cathar fortress was demolished, and the present ruin is that of a later royal stronghold. However, it presents a remarkable alignment on the morning of the summer solstice, when the light from the rising sun shines through the narrow window slits of the castle.

SACRO CATINO OF GENOA

Location: Museum of Genoa Cathedral, Genoa, Italy



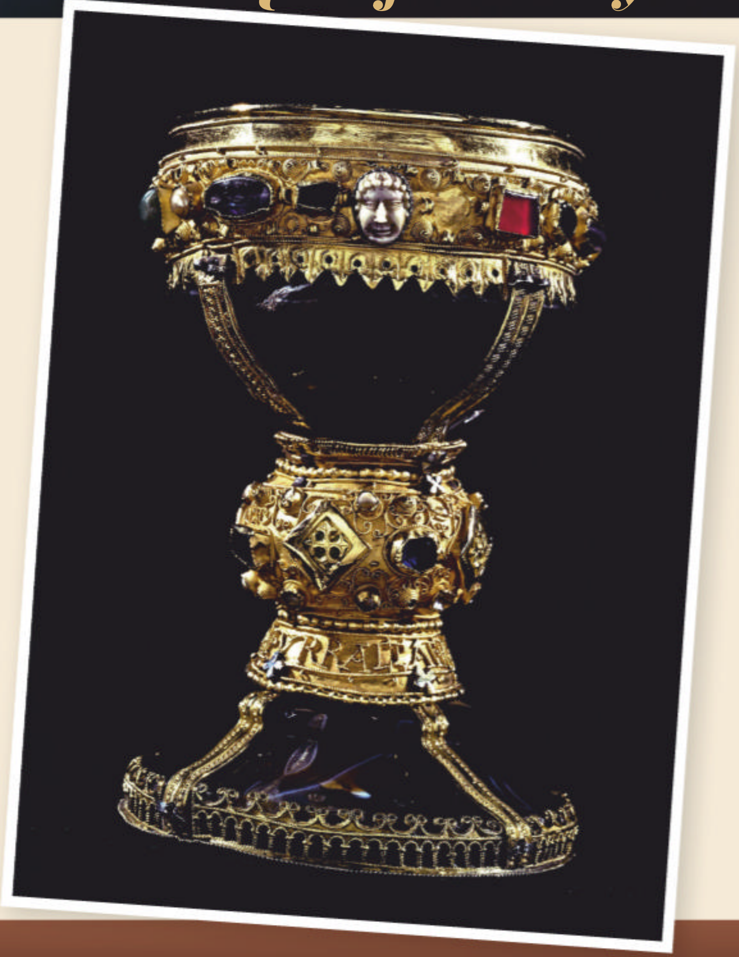
This bright green hexagonal vessel certainly looks otherworldly, seeming to shine with some mysterious interior light. From the 12th century it was held in Genoa and revered as the Holy Chalice. It was said to have been recovered by knights of the First Crusade and to be carved from emerald. In the early 19th century Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Genoa and ordered his soldiers to bring the Sacro Catino to Paris. Unfortunately, on the way they dropped it. The Sacro Catino shattered and, in breaking, revealed itself to be made of glass, not emerald. In Paris, the fragments were examined by scientists from the Academy of Science, who determined it was probably a Byzantine bowl. Stuck together, although with a piece missing, it was returned to Genoa in 1816. More recent research suggests it was made in the 9th or 10th century – so it's definitely not the Holy Grail.

CHALICE OF DONA URRACA

Location: St Isidore's Basilica, León, Spain

The Chalice of Doña Urraca has been held at St Isidore's Basilica in Spain since the 11th century. It was given to the cathedral by Urraca of Zamora, the daughter of Ferdinand I of León.

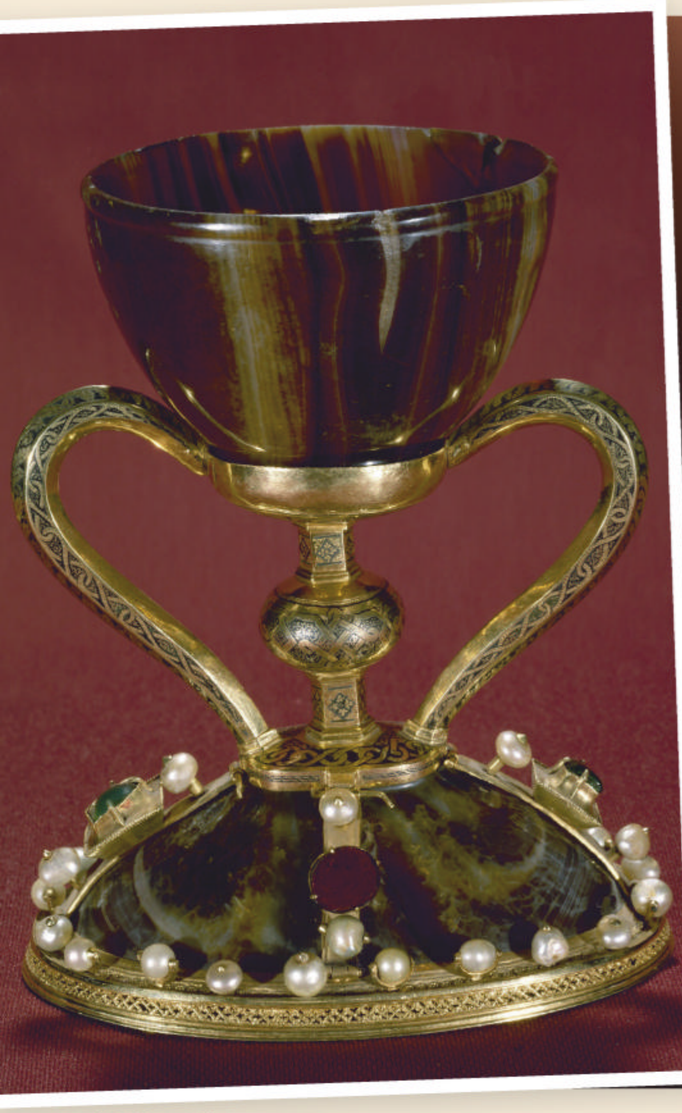
However, it's only since 2014 that it has been recognised as a possible candidate for the Holy Grail. Two Spanish researchers investigating Muslim texts in the cathedral (for many centuries much of Spain was under Muslim control), discovered documents telling how Muslims, who also controlled the Holy Land, acquired a sacred cup from the Christian community in Jerusalem, taking it to Cairo in Egypt. From there, it was sent as a diplomatic gift to Ferdinand of León in gratitude for his aid during a famine. The chalice itself was dated by the researchers to between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st century CE. Such was the interest in their claims that the cathedral authorities had to move the chalice to a separate room for display.



RIGHT The Chalice of Doña Urraca bears parallels to the chalice in Valencia; both are kiddush cups of the same era

THE HOLY CHALICE OF VALENCIA CATHEDRAL

Location: Valencia Cathedral, Valencia, Spain



In a chapel of the magnificent Gothic cathedral in Valencia, Spain, there is a simple stone cup, carved from red agate. It sits on a much more elaborate base that makes it look somewhat like a little pot sat atop a bejewelled spirit stove.

According to the belief of many pilgrims, and the testimony of hundreds of years, the cup is the chalice that Jesus used at the Last Supper. Although it seems unlikely that the vessel could have survived for so long, there is some evidence for its authenticity. Most important to this is the cup itself, ignoring its elaborate base. It's made from a type of red/brown agate that is only found in Palestine and Egypt. What's more, archaeologists have dated the carving of the cup to between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st century CE. So it's certainly old enough to have been used by Jesus.

What's more, the agate cup itself is the right size and volume for a kiddush cup, the traditional Jewish vessel used for blessing on the eve of the Sabbath. The cup would be filled with wine and the kiddush prayer recited over it. The person reciting the prayer then drinks from the cup before passing it to the next person at the table.

So the chalice in Valencia fits the bill for authenticity in both its age and its possible use and it remains on display in Valencia Cathedral throughout the year, where it is visited and venerated by pilgrims. The cup is brought out twice a year, on Holy Thursday (the day before Good Friday when, according to tradition, Jesus was said to have celebrated the Last Supper) and on the last Thursday in October, when the chalice itself is used for the celebration of the annual mass held in its honour.

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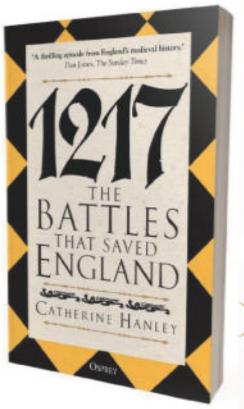
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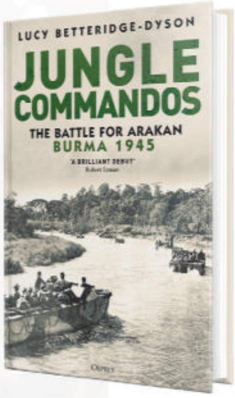
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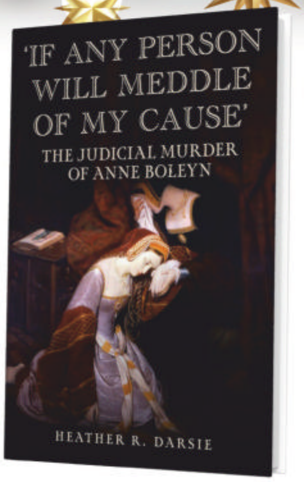
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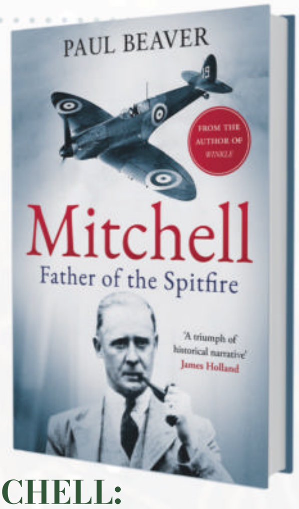
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73 EASTING

SOUTHEASTERN IRAQ
26-27 FEBRUARY 1991

Written by Michael E Haskew

On 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein ordered his army to invade neighbouring Kuwait. The unprovoked attack and brutal Iraqi occupation sparked outrage, international condemnation and a demand from the United Nations that Iraq withdraw immediately. Three days after the invasion, US President George HW Bush declared: "This will not stand, this Iraqi aggression against Kuwait."

During the subsequent Operation Desert Shield, the United States led a coalition of 35 nations in a build-up of overwhelming military capability on land, sea and air in preparation for the forcible ejection of the Iraqi Army from Kuwait. Within five months, the coalition had assembled more than 950,000 troops, 3,000 tanks, 1,800 aircraft and 2,200 artillery pieces – along with considerable naval fire-support capability – to oppose the Iraqi forces, which numbered over one million troops, 5,500 tanks and 700 aircraft. On 17 January 1991, the coalition unleashed a torrent of cruise missiles launched from submarines and warships, along with a sustained aerial bombing campaign designed to degrade the Iraqi combat effectiveness prior to the initiation of ground operations.

Thirty-eight days later, on 24 February 1991, coalition ground forces commenced operations against the Iraqi military, intent on driving the aggressors from Kuwait and destroying their fighting capability, particularly that of the elite Republican Guard divisions – well-trained and equipped troops, some of whom were veterans of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88.

US General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of coalition forces, devised a plan to accomplish the mission at hand. Utilising overwhelming air power to erode Iraqi command and control and reduce enemy combat capability, he also employed

An Iraqi tank stands abandoned as burning oil wells fill the sky with smoke

An Abrams tank next to a picture of Saddam Hussein on the outskirts of Kuwait City, March 1991

a successful campaign of deception. While large-scale amphibious manoeuvres complemented by covert operations and phoney radio traffic created the impression that the coalition intended to invade Kuwait from the south and into the most formidable Iraqi defences, Schwarzkopf directed a massive force of several combat divisions to sweep westward in a wide arc, taking up positions to attack to the north and then northeast into Iraq in a wide envelopment.

Air bombardment had blinded the Iraqi high command, maximising the effectiveness of the southern deception such that the bulk of the enemy forces were oriented toward the coastline in anticipation of an amphibious landing. Meanwhile, the four divisions of the XVIII Airborne Corps, the US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, US 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and the French 6th Light Division established flank security for the sledgehammer of the US VII Corps. The US VII Corps comprised of the US 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions, 1st Infantry Division and 1st Cavalry Division, along with the British 1st Armoured Division churning from its jump-off points in Saudi Arabia and racing to cut off the retreat of Iraqi forces once the enemy realised the major threat was to its rear.

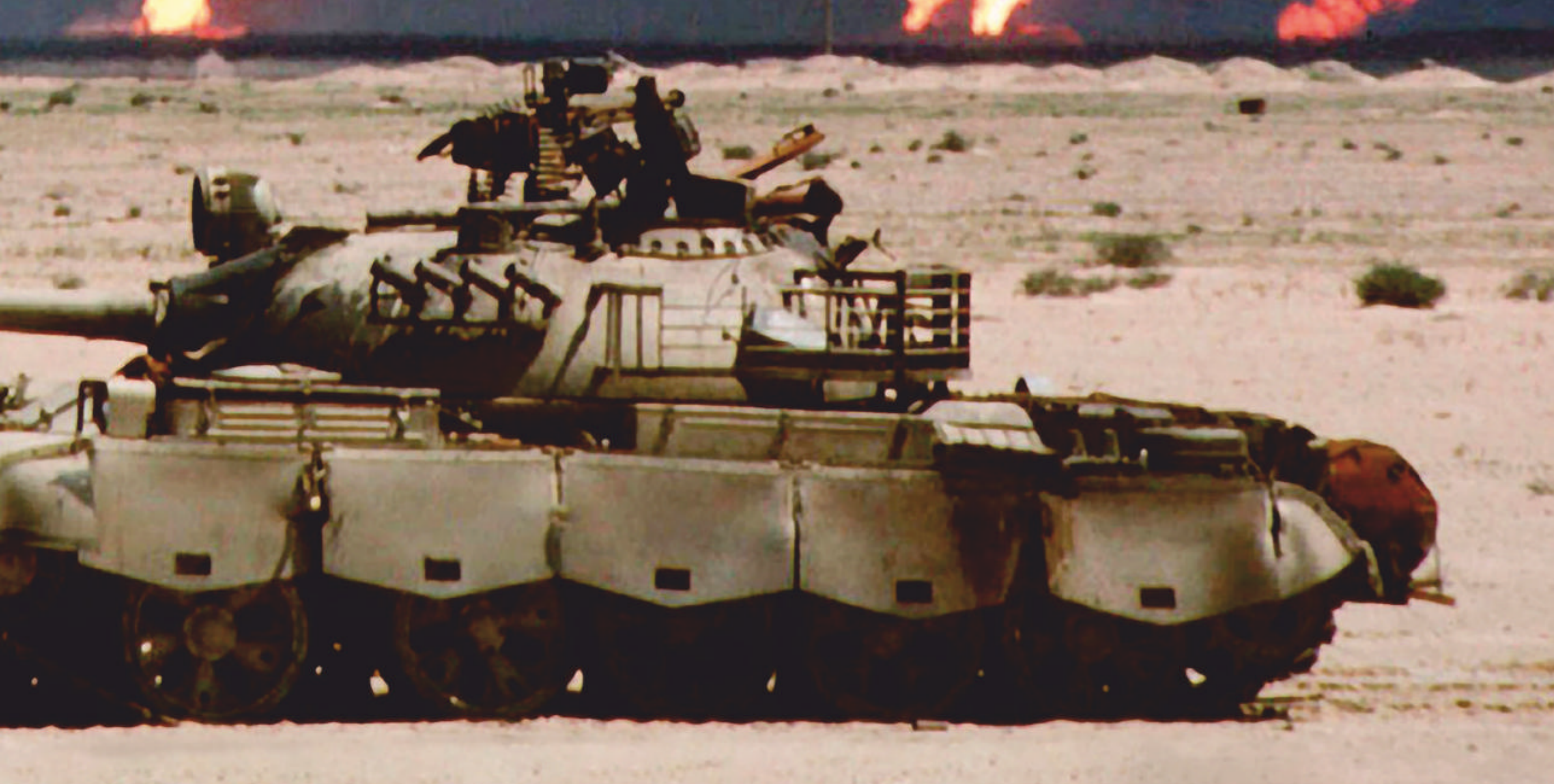
The culmination of Operation Desert Sabre, the ground component of Desert Storm, was a stunning victory over the Iraqi forces. Schwarzkopf explained: "Once we had taken out his eyes, we did what could best be described as the 'Hail Mary' play in football. This was absolutely an extraordinary move. I must tell you I can't recall any time in the annals of military history when this number of forces have moved over this distance to put themselves in a position to be able to attack. I think it was pretty effective."

The electrifying advance of VII Corps during the 100 hours of the ground war was punctuated by sharp clashes between its superb M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks, with M3 Bradley cavalry fighting vehicles, and those of the Iraqi Republican Guard – Soviet-made T-72 tanks and older T-62 and T-55 models and BMP infantry fighting vehicles. At the tip of the VII Corps spear, the three squadrons of the US 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (2nd ACR) embarked on a covering force mission during the envelopment of the enemy forces in Kuwait. When the Iraqi senior commanders became aware of the 'Hail Mary' movement, the Republican Guard Tawakalna Mechanized Division was repositioned to the west to contest the advance of VII Corps.

On 26 February, the second full day of the ground war, the 2nd ACR ranged forward of the coalition juggernaut to make contact with enemy forces to their front, determine their strength and find or create weak points before the bulk of the VII Corps armoured fist was brought to bear.

THE BATTLE COMMENCES

As the 2nd ACR crossed the Iraqi frontier, it penetrated roughly 20km and encountered enemy resistance for the first time on the evening of 24 February. Bradleys responded with 25mm cannon fire and TOW wire-guided anti-tank missiles, while mortar rounds were fired effectively. Large numbers of Iraqi soldiers surrendered to ▶



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01 Positioned for action

Prior to the initiation of the 100-hour ground war during Operation Desert Storm, the coalition amasses overwhelming firepower and trains extensively, preparing for the execution of its 'Hail Mary' plan and a crushing victory over Iraqi forces.

02 Rapid advance

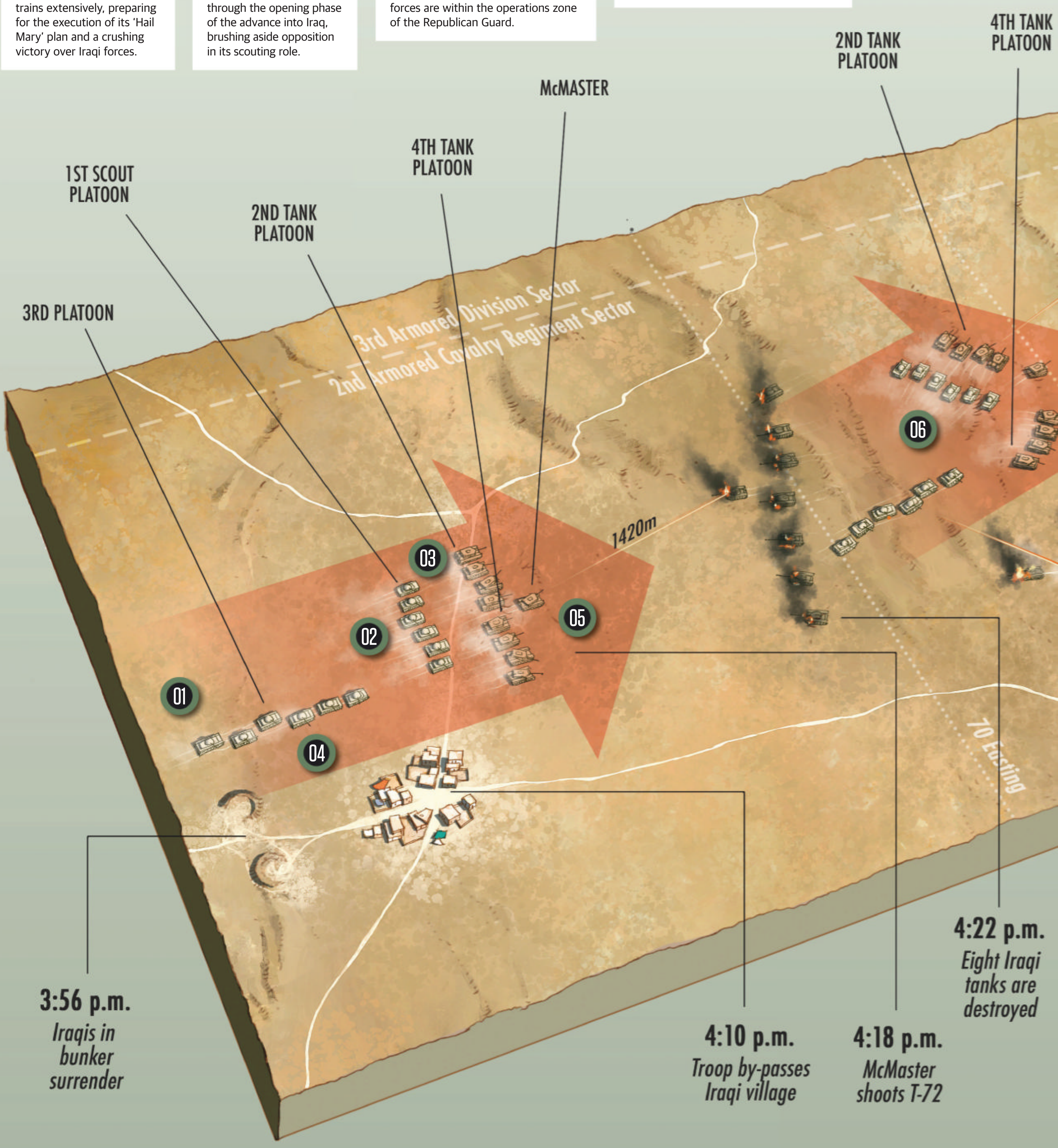
In the vanguard of VII Corps, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (2nd ACR) encounters sporadic resistance through the opening phase of the advance into Iraq, brushing aside opposition in its scouting role.

03 Reconnaissance rewarded

On the second day of Operation Desert Storm, Ghost Troop, 2nd ACR, destroys a dozen Iraqi armoured fighting vehicles and gathers intelligence indicating that coalition forces are within the operations zone of the Republican Guard.

04 Chance encounter

Eagle Troop, 2nd ACR detects prepared Iraqi defensive positions as one of its Bradley CFVs rolls atop an enemy bunker and at least 40 T-72 and T-55 tanks are observed dug in on the reverse slope of a low ridge.


4TH TANK PLATOON
2ND TANK PLATOON
McMASTER
4TH TANK PLATOON
2ND TANK PLATOON
1ST SCOUT PLATOON
3RD PLATOON
3rd Armored Division Sector
2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment Sector
1420m
70 Easting
01
02
03
04
05
06

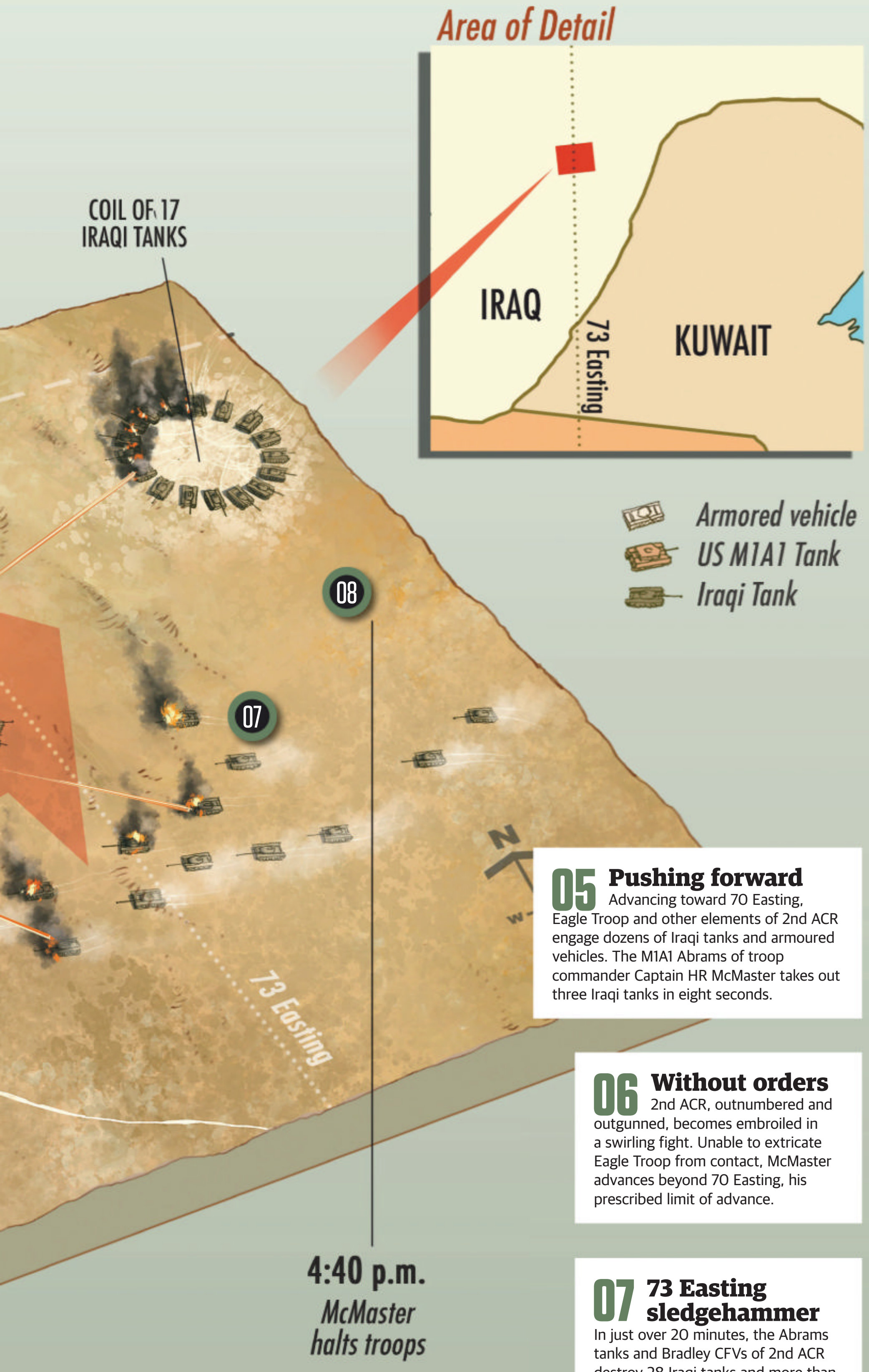
3:56 p.m.
Iraqis in bunker surrender

4:10 p.m.
Troop by-passes Iraqi village

4:18 p.m.
McMaster shoots T-72

4:22 p.m.
Eight Iraqi tanks are destroyed

Map illustration: Rocio Espín Piñar



05 Pushing forward

Advancing toward 70 Easting, Eagle Troop and other elements of 2nd ACR engage dozens of Iraqi tanks and armoured vehicles. The M1A1 Abrams of troop commander Captain HR McMaster takes out three Iraqi tanks in eight seconds.

06 Without orders

2nd ACR, outnumbered and outgunned, becomes embroiled in a swirling fight. Unable to extricate Eagle Troop from contact, McMaster advances beyond 70 Easting, his prescribed limit of advance.

07 73 Easting sledgehammer

In just over 20 minutes, the Abrams tanks and Bradley CFVs of 2nd ACR destroy 28 Iraqi tanks and more than 40 other enemy vehicles, expending large amounts of ammunition and TOW anti-tank missiles.

08 1st Division forward

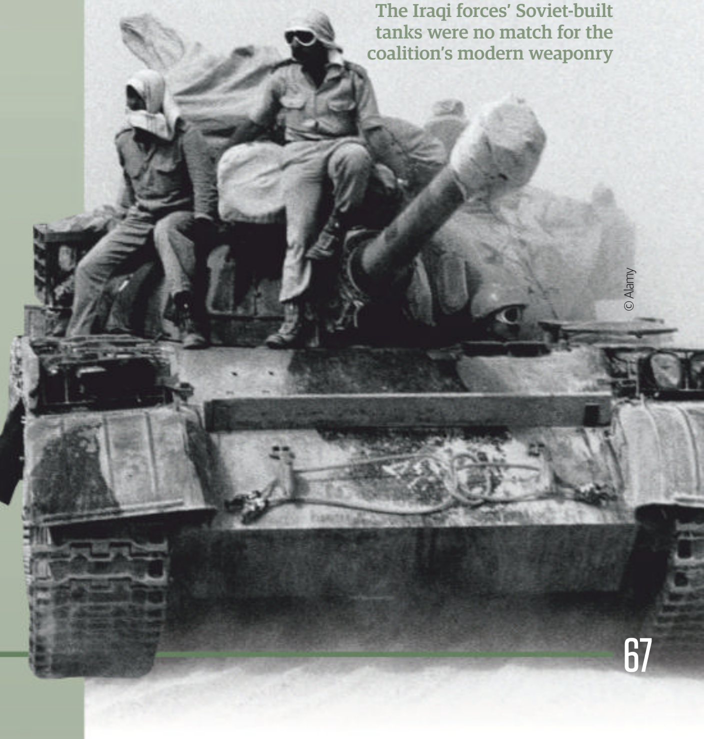
Having engaged well beyond its initial mission instructions, 2nd ACR stands aside as the heavy tank and armoured units of the 1st Infantry Division pass through their positions en route to Objective Norfolk and further attrition of Iraqi armoured forces.

the regiment's Fox (F) Troop that night. The following day, Ghost (G) Troop destroyed an Iraqi scout unit of 12 small armoured vehicles. Intelligence gleaned from the action indicated that the Republican Guard was in the vicinity, and orders were subsequently received for the planned turn from the northward penetration to a northeastern axis of advance.

After a night of heavy rain, elements of the 2nd ACR defeated several companies of the Iraqi 50th Brigade on 26 February and received orders to adjust the regiment's operational boundary with the British 1st Armoured Division to the south. By late morning a sandstorm restricted visibility, but all three squadrons of the 2nd ACR engaged elements of the Tawakalna Division near 60 Easting, a location corresponding to map coordinates in the virtually featureless desert. By noon, the cavalrymen reported 23 Iraqi T-55s, 25 armoured personnel carriers and other vehicles destroyed.

The 2nd ACR was ordered to continue its advance to 70 Easting but to avoid bringing on a general engagement forward of VII Corps as the heavy combat formations proceeded on a front of four armoured and mechanised divisions. The three squadrons of the 2nd ACR advanced with eight of the regiment's nine cavalry troops abreast in search of the Republican Guard. Eagle (E) Troop of 2nd Squadron (Cougar Squadron) moved forward generally in a wedge formation, its strength 12 Bradley CFVs and nine M1A1s. The Americans were unaware that they had entered an Iraqi training ground or that a road ran parallel and through a nearby village before proceeding across the Kuwaiti border.

Anticipating enemy contact the Iraqi commander, Major Mohammed, had established defensive positions along the



The Iraqi forces' Soviet-built tanks were no match for the coalition's modern weaponry

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LEFT A soldier from the US 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment searches a member of the Iraqi Republican Guard after his surrender, April 1991

TOP-RIGHT The Abrams' 120mm smoothbore gun could knock out enemy armour from a distance of 2,500m

BOTTOM-RIGHT Retired Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Gauthier christens an Iraqi T-72 at Rose Barracks in Germany, March 2016

reverse slope of a slight ridge, hoping that any opposing tanks would crest the high ground and immediately become vulnerable as they topped the elevation. He also fortified the village with anti-aircraft guns to be used in an anti-personnel role along with troops and machine-gun positions to defend an approach along the road. According to Captain HR McMaster, commanding Eagle Troop, the Iraqis had dug in roughly 40 T-72s and 16 BMPs about 915m beyond the ridge. Mines had been sown, and bunkers and defensive trenches screened the armoured vehicles. About 2,740m further east, Major Mohammed placed his command post along with a reserve of 18 T-72s and other armoured vehicles.

As Eagle Troop reached 67 Easting, where it had been ordered to halt, fighting erupted. McMaster described the contact: "Staff Sergeant John McReynolds' Bradley drove atop an Iraqi bunker serving as an observation post. Two enemy soldiers emerged and surrendered, and McReynolds took them to the rear. The Bradley of McReynolds' wingman, Sergeant Maurice Harris, came under fire. As Harris engaged the enemy with his 25mm, 1st Lieutenant Tim Gauthier fired a TOW missile into the village so the explosion would orient our tanks. After my gunner, Staff Sergeant Craig Koch, fired a round to mark the target centre, all nine tanks fired high-explosive rounds into the village to suppress the position."

As Eagle Troop, the remainder of 2nd Squadron and 3rd Squadron fought the Iraqis at 67 Easting, McMaster received permission to move ahead to 70 Easting, and the fighting spread to the south and east. Unknown to the cavalrymen, they were outnumbered three to one. Another Bradley took out an Iraqi T-72 and E Troop shifted to a 'tanks forward' combat configuration. McMaster's tank, nicknamed Mad Max, rolled up a small hill north of the village, and Koch yelled: "Tanks direct front."

McMaster said: "From my hatch I could see eight T-72s in prepared positions directly to our front. As I sent a contact report to the troop, Koch destroyed two more tanks. Then all nine Abrams engaged together as we advanced. Within about a minute everything within range was in flames."

In approximately eight seconds, Koch and Mad Max had destroyed three Iraqi T-72s. During the one-sided fight, the nine Abrams tanks of Eagle Troop had destroyed 28 Iraqi tanks, 16 armoured fighting vehicles and 30 trucks in just 23 minutes. There were no American casualties in that engagement.

> "ALL NINE ABRAMS ENGAGED TOGETHER AS WE ADVANCED. WITHIN ABOUT A MINUTE EVERYTHING WITHIN THE RANGE OF OUR GUNS WAS IN FLAMES"

As McMaster was fully involved in clearing the westernmost Iraqi defensive positions, Lieutenant John Gifford, his executive officer, chimed in on the radio: "I know you don't want to know this right now, but you're at the limit of advance; you're at the 70 Easting." McMaster replied: "Tell them we can't stop. Tell them we're in contact, and we have to continue this attack. Tell them I'm sorry."

Despite the order to avoid a general engagement, Eagle Troop and the rest of 2nd ACR had run into a much larger enemy force and were unable to prevent the battle from steadily escalating. McMaster was compelled to stay in the fight and could not disengage to a defensive position. Although the original plan had been to locate the Republican Guard and then move aside to allow the heavy divisions of VII Corps to pass through and take on the enemy elite, McMaster's only alternative was to fight on, possibly preventing the larger VII Corps divisional forces' deployment from their road march formations to combat wedges with tanks forward. Then, there was also the possibility of the armoured cavalry squadrons being overwhelmed by a major counter-attack – but McMaster showed initiative as the situation dictated.

Pushing ahead, Eagle Troop was becoming fully engaged with the 18th Mechanized Battalion of the Tawakalna Division. The Battle of 73 Easting was steadily growing as other elements of the 2nd ACR continued their advance. The 1st and 3rd Troops, 2nd ACR, had fought the Iraqi 50th Armored Brigade the previous day and were now engaging the surviving elements of that unit as well as the 37th Brigade of the Iraqi 12th Armored Division south of the Tawakalna Division positions. Iron (I) Troop, 3rd Squadron, filled a gap in the line of advance, while Ghost Troop, 2nd Squadron, north of Eagle Troop, and Killer (K) Troop, 3rd Squadron pitched in.

McMaster directed Eagle Troop to 73 Easting, the ridgeline where the Iraqi tank reserve was located. "My tank and others destroyed the first of the reserve from a range of approximately 1,000 yards [914m] beginning at about 1640," he recalled. "We could not see the others until we crested the rise and entered the assembly area. The enemy reserve was attempting to move out, but E Troop tanks destroyed all of them at close range before they could deploy."

Meanwhile, Iron Troop fought its way to 70 Easting and destroyed 16 Iraqi tanks and an enemy battalion command post.

Elsewhere, Ghost Troop took up positions on a low ridgeline and fought off counter-attacks by tanks of the Tawakalna and 12th Armored Divisions for several hours. Waves of infantry streamed alongside the Iraqi tanks, threatening to overrun the Americans. Air support had been spotty at best due to the inclement weather, but it provided great assistance along with concentrated artillery fire in beating back the attackers. By 9pm, Ghost Troop had fired more than half its available TOW missiles, and artillery and MLRS rocket systems had fired more than 700 rounds in support. By the time the Iraqi attacks petered out, Ghost Troop had destroyed two companies of enemy tanks and inflicted scores of casualties, the bodies of Iraqi soldiers strewn across the desert floor.

Eagle Troop fought off occasional infantry attacks and took on a company-size

PENETRATOR

2d CAVALRY REGIMENT
2d CAVAL

TOP US troops from 2nd ACR examine the cockpit of a destroyed MiG-23 jet fighter, April 1991

ABOVE In March 2016 2nd ACR held a ceremony at Rose Barracks to mark 25 years since the Battle of 73 Easting

counter-attack by T-72s and BMPs at long range, destroying the enemy armoured vehicles before they could engage.

During the melee the 2nd ACR front extended to 74 Easting, and the 1st Infantry Division began passing through the cavalry lines in darkness around 2am on February 27. Its immediate attention was focused on Objective Norfolk, the intersection of the main road into Kuwait and several dusty desert trails. What was left of the 18th Mechanized and 37th Brigades was now up against more than a handful of Abrams and Bradleys, which had already taken the measure of them. The vanguard of the 1st Infantry Division included six battalions of M1A1 tanks, well over 300 in total, backed by 155mm field artillery and air support as the weather improved.

Task Force 1-41, a brigade-sized force, encountered a battalion of enemy T-55 tanks, some of which had not turned their engines over and did not present a signature to thermal imaging equipment. A Bradley unit became disoriented and passed in front of enemy positions, taking fire that destroyed a single cavalry fighting vehicle and killed the three American crewmen.

After the initial enemy fire was detected, M1A1s blasted three of the Iraqi tanks before they were able to fire a second time. The Task Force 1-41 commander consolidated his position and ordered an artillery bombardment to break up Iraqi infantry attacks and dislodge enemy armour.

Within hours Task 1-41 would spearhead the US drive on Objective Norfolk, where another armoured engagement occurred. At times the Iraqis stood and fought, but on many occasions they surrendered. Either way, the outcome of the coalition ground assault was inevitable.

AFTERMATH

During the Battle of 73 Easting, American forces suffered only six casualties. A Bradley of Ghost Troop was out of action as its (25mm) cannon had jammed and its TOW launcher was not operating. While the crew attempted to clear the cannon, an Iraqi BMP, which was thought to have been silenced, fired a 73mm shell that struck the Bradley and killed Sergeant Nels Moller. Other casualties inflicted during continuation actions were caused primarily by friendly fire. One M1A1 was slightly damaged by a mine, and a single Bradley was lost to enemy action at 73 Easting itself.

In sharp contrast, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, outnumbered significantly, had shown outstanding tactical manoeuvre and combat initiative among its line officers in the destruction of the 18th Mechanized and 37th Brigades of the Iraqi Tawakalna and 12th Armored Divisions respectively. The 2nd and 3rd Squadrons, 2nd ACR destroyed an estimated 159 Iraqi tanks and more than 250 other vehicles, inflicting as many as 1,000 casualties and taking approximately 2,000 prisoners. The 2nd Squadron accounted for 55 enemy tanks and 45 other vehicles.

The Battle of 73 Easting was one of the largest armoured battles in the history of the US armed forces and one of the last such engagements of the 20th century. At 73 Easting and elsewhere, coalition forces demonstrated superior training, tactical coordination and technical prowess. While the American and British armoured units fielded tanks and other weapons systems that employed the latest technology, the Iraqi enemy generally operated Soviet-built export models of the T-72 and main battle tanks that were at least a generation behind in their battlefield capability.

The Battle of 73 Easting established coalition forces as disciplined, well-trained, capably led and equipped with the latest in land warfare weaponry and systems. Although its employment was somewhat dictated by adverse weather, air superiority played a key role from the inception of Operation Desert Storm, through 73 Easting and to the conclusion of the 100-hour ground war that ejected the Iraqi Army from Kuwait, shattered the elite Republican Guard and inflicted a stinging defeat on the forces of Saddam Hussein. ○

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WHAT IF...

ANNE BOLEYN AND HENRY VIII HAD A SON?

If she had given the monarch a male heir, the crowns of England and Scotland might never have been united

INTERVIEW WITH

© Dr Elizabeth Norton

DR ELIZABETH NORTON

Dr Norton is an historian specialising in the queens of England and the Tudor period. She has authored many academic studies and books, including *Women Who Ruled the World: 5000 Years of Female Monarchy.*

Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived. It's one of the most widely known mnemonics in British education. If Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife, had given birth to a son, this turbulent era of British history might have been completely different. A daughter and a miscarried son preceded Anne's execution in 1536, but also led to the famous reign of Elizabeth I, the end of the Tudor line and the union of the crowns of England and Scotland. If Anne had given the king a male heir, British history could have taken a very different course.

Why was it vital for Anne to have a son?

The Tudor dynasty was not a fertile one. Henry VIII had no surviving brothers, while his father, Henry VII, was an only child. As a result, Henry VIII really needed to produce a male heir to ensure that the succession was settled. England had never had a crowned reigning queen before, with the only example of a female claimant – that of Empress Matilda in the 12th century – not a positive one. As far as Henry VIII was concerned, Anne needed to produce a son to stave off civil war.

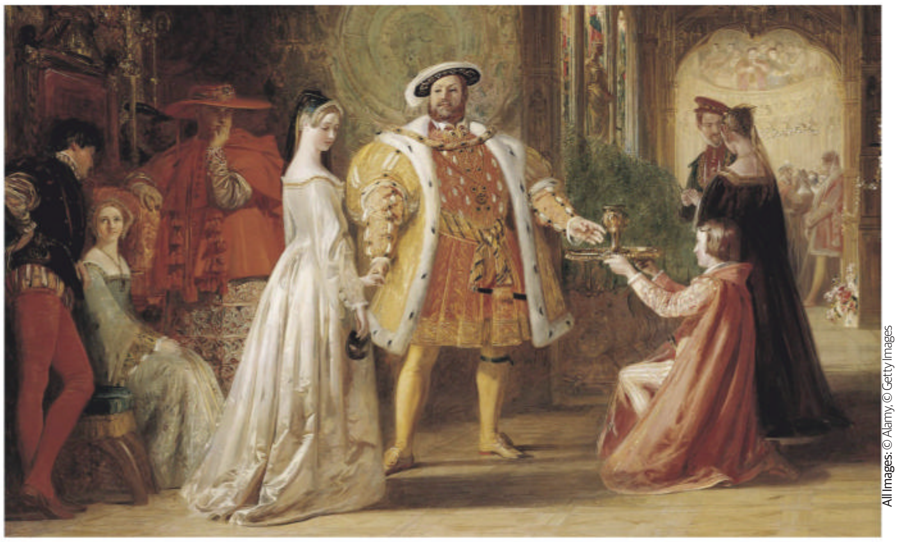
How would a son have affected those close to the royal couple, such as Henry VIII's chief minister Thomas Cromwell and the Boleyn family?

The Boleyns would have been thrilled if Anne had produced a son. She was close to her parents, particularly her mother Elizabeth, as well as her brother George. All would have been pleased on a personal level, but their overwhelming reaction would have been relief since Anne's position would have become insurmountable.

Thomas Cromwell, on the other hand, would undoubtedly have been less than pleased. Although he was, to a great extent, politically aligned with the Boleyn family, he and Anne did not get on, with some evidence to suggest that his career was held back during her time as queen. It was Cromwell who steered the plot to replace Anne with Jane Seymour, something that could never have occurred had Anne given birth to a son.

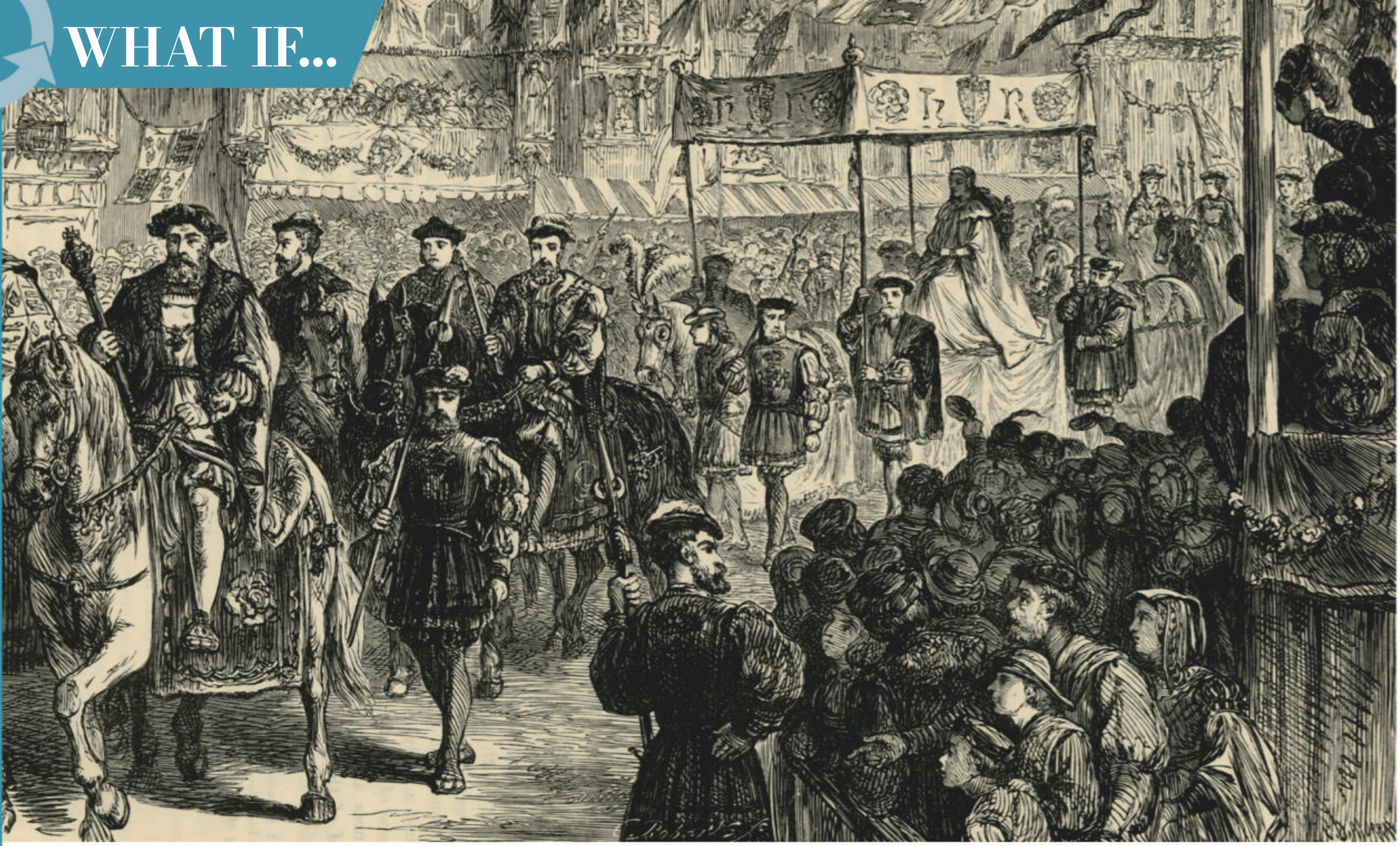
How much of the turbulence of Henry's reign would have been avoided by Anne having a son?

Well, he almost certainly wouldn't have gone on to have another four wives! Otherwise, much would likely have remained the same. The Dissolution of the Monasteries began towards the end of Anne's time as queen and this would still have sparked the Pilgrimage of Grace, which was a great rebellion against Henry, in October 1536.



All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

RIGHT A 19th-century painting of Henry VIII meeting Anne Boleyn



Anne's marriage was always unpopular with the people at large, so her continued marriage might have caused further political troubles for Henry. Nonetheless, most people would have been happy to have a male heir and her reputation might have improved.

Anne would likely (although not certainly) have pushed the king to go further with his religious reforms although, as Catherine Parr found in 1546, Henry was no friend to Protestants even if he did break the English Church away from Rome.

If Anne had given birth to a living male heir in 1536, how would it have affected Henry's relationship with Jane Seymour? Would he have stayed married to Anne?

I don't think we would remember Jane Seymour at all if Anne had given birth to a son in 1536. Her failure to bear a son very much created an opening for Jane, which she exploited. Without a son, Anne was vulnerable. As soon as her son was born, her position would have been entirely fixed. Divorce wasn't really possible in the 16th century, so to end a marriage it was necessary to obtain an annulment. This meant that the marriage had never been valid, something which had implications for the legitimacy of the couple's children. Henry could never risk calling the legitimacy of his son into question and so would have stayed married to Anne. Jane Seymour would most likely have been a royal mistress.

> **"ANNE'S MARRIAGE WAS UNPOPULAR WITH THE PEOPLE, BUT MOST WOULD'VE BEEN HAPPY IF SHE'D BIRTHED A MALE HEIR"**

Anne is sometimes framed as a political schemer. What moves might she have made if she'd given birth to a son?

Anne's position would have been supreme if she had given birth to a son and I think it's likely that she might have moved against some of her enemies, most notably Thomas Cromwell. She might also have secured the demotion of her uncle, the duke of Norfolk, whom she disliked and we could expect to see him retreat from court somewhat.

It is possible that her relationship with Princess Mary might have improved, since no one would seriously consider Mary as heir in preference to a brother. Anne had already attempted to befriend her and would probably have continued to do so. Mary did eventually sign a document agreeing that her parents' marriage had been invalid and she might have been prepared to do this, with time, if Anne remained queen.

ABOVE
An illustration of Anne's marriage procession in 1533

BELOW
Hever Castle was the childhood home of Anne Boleyn

RIGHT
Queen Elizabeth I was Anne Boleyn's only surviving child

FAR-RIGHT
William Shakespeare was a leading figure in the Elizabethan Golden Age

Anne would very likely have promoted the religious reform movement and we would probably remember her, rather than Catherine Parr, as England's first Protestant queen. She would have continued to patronise Thomas Cranmer and change might have occurred more quickly in England under her queenship, although she would have had to be careful to ensure that she did not overstep as far as Henry was concerned.

How would people in England and abroad have reacted to the news of a male heir?

Most people in England would have been ecstatic. When sons were born into the royal family, bonfires were lit in the street and free wine was handed out, giving the occasion a party atmosphere. I think most people would also have been relieved, since it would mean that the succession was finally settled. Even those who opposed Anne Boleyn would probably come to terms with the eventual succession of her son, just as they did with Elizabeth.

Abroad, the position would be more tricky. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V did not recognise Anne as queen (although his ambassador was manoeuvred into bowing to her at Easter 1536 for the first time). The death of his aunt, Catherine of Aragon, in January 1536 would, however, have smoothed relations somewhat. Most likely Catherine's family would have come to terms with the birth of Anne's son over time, just as they did with Elizabeth's eventual succession.

How would the birth of a son have changed Elizabeth's life?

As a girl, Elizabeth would be pushed down the succession by a baby brother (as indeed happened in 1537 with the birth of her half-brother). On the positive side, if Anne had given birth to a son then Elizabeth's legitimacy would not have been challenged and she would likely have had a happier and more conventional childhood. Elizabeth, as the full sister of the king, could likely expect an arranged foreign marriage, just as her father's sisters had. Perhaps she would have married Philip II of Spain instead of her half-sister Mary, or maybe one of the Habsburg archdukes or the king of Sweden. It would all depend on the alliance that her brother was hoping to build.

If Anne had a son, would England have still experienced a Golden Age as it did under Elizabeth I?

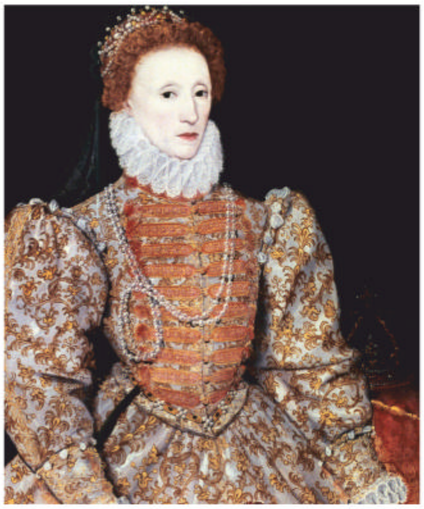
Yes and no. A lot of the glories of Elizabeth's reign, such as the growth of the theatre and the works of William Shakespeare, happened without too much direct input from her. The same can probably be said for exploration, with the first attempt to found an English colony in the North America at Roanoake Island happening during her reign.

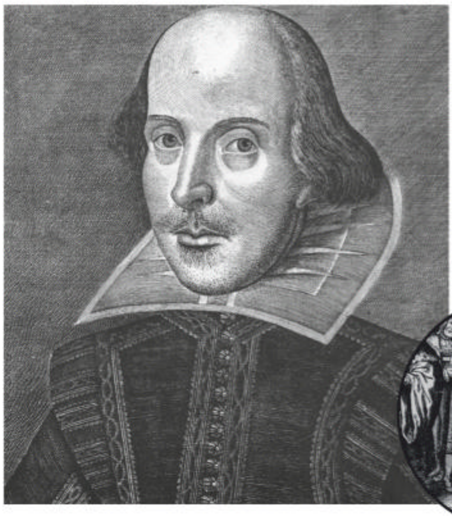
A lot would depend on her brother's personality. Edward VI was fairly puritanical in his religious faith, with a much stricter settlement of religion during his reign, something that would have been a major change if Elizabeth's full brother had reigned instead.

While reigning queens were rare, they tend to draw attention and remain highly visible in the historical record. As a result, our attention is drawn to Queen Elizabeth I in a way that it would not be to, say, King Henry IX. Henry IX would not have owned 2,000 dresses or have appeared resplendent as Gloriana in portraiture from the period! Many of the difficulties that Elizabeth I faced as a female ruler arguably made her stronger, or she used them to her advantage. There might well have been something of a Golden Age, but not to the same extent as [that of] Elizabeth I.

How might the monarchy look today if Anne had given Henry VIII a son?

Anne's marriage triggered the English Reformation, so we can assume that England would still have become a Protestant country under the reign of her son. The most interesting change would be in relation to Scotland. If Anne's son married and produced heirs then there would be no union of the crowns in 1603 as there was at the accession of James VI to the English throne. However, one interesting point is that in 1560 Mary, Queen of Scots was widowed. She returned home to Scotland the following year looking to make an advantageous second marriage. If Anne's son was still unmarried, he would undoubtedly have been the frontrunner in the race for Mary's hand. Perhaps we would have seen the union of England and Scotland 40 years before it actually occurred, with the marriage of Scotland's queen to England's king. ○





ALTERNATE REALITIES

SPECIFICS

1936

29 JAN

MISCARRIAGE

When Henry and Anne were publicly married in 1533 (they were likely privately married in late 1532, before his first marriage was technically annulled), Anne was already visibly pregnant with Elizabeth. After one miscarriage in 1534, she miscarried again in 1536. It was the death of this male child that was probably the final straw for Anne, as Henry lost patience with her.

2 MAY

ACCUSATIONS

By May 1536 Anne, now fallen out of Henry's favour, also fell out with Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell had the opportunity to rid himself of the queen and improve his standing with the king. A musician called Mark Smeaton confessed, under torture, to having an affair with Anne, while also naming three other men. Her brother was also accused of committing adultery, treason and incest with her. Anne was arrested and the marriage annulled.

19 MAY

DEATH

On 19 May, after these accusations had sealed her fate, Anne was taken to Tower Green to be beheaded. She went peacefully, using her final moments to proclaim: "I am come hither to die, for according to the law and by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it". Henry married Jane Seymour just 11 days later.

SPECULATION

29 JAN

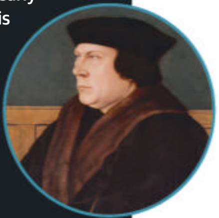
BIRTH OF A SON

If the miscarriage Anne suffered in 1536 had carried to full term, she would have given Henry VIII the legitimate male heir he desperately wanted. With this, the burgeoning romance that Henry had with Jane Seymour may have come to nothing more than another of Henry's extramarital dalliances.

2 MAY

POLITICAL MANOEUVRING

Having had a son, Anne would have become untouchable to those who wanted her gone. With the power in her hands, she might have made moves to rid herself of Cromwell, bringing his rise to prominence to an early end and reducing his influence to nothing. Far from the star of *Wolf Hall*, Cromwell may have been little more than a footnote in history.

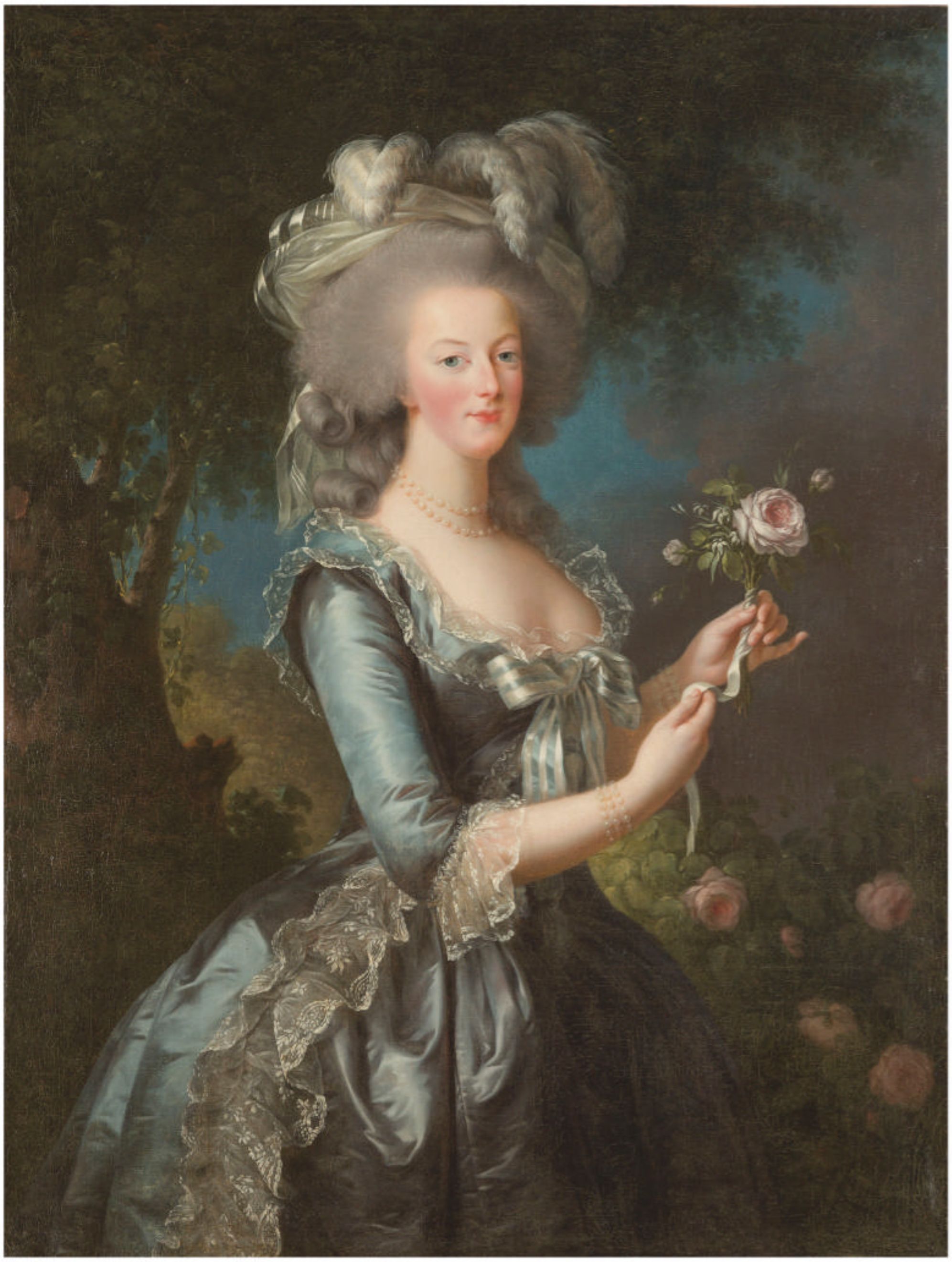


19 MAY

LIFE AND POWER

With a healthy son by her side, Anne would've been the unquestioned queen by the end of May 1536. She might have begun to exercise her power by patronising Thomas Cranmer and promoting Protestantism across the kingdom. There may have been relief around the nation as political stability had replaced uncertainty over the succession.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images



STRIKE A POSE

◀ Painted by French artist Élisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun in 1783, this portrait of Marie Antoinette with a rose is one of the most famous and admired depictions of the French queen. She's wearing a blue silk dress, but in the first version of the portrait she was attired in a less formal blouse dress.

© Château de Versailles, Dist. Grand Palais RMN / Christophe Fouin

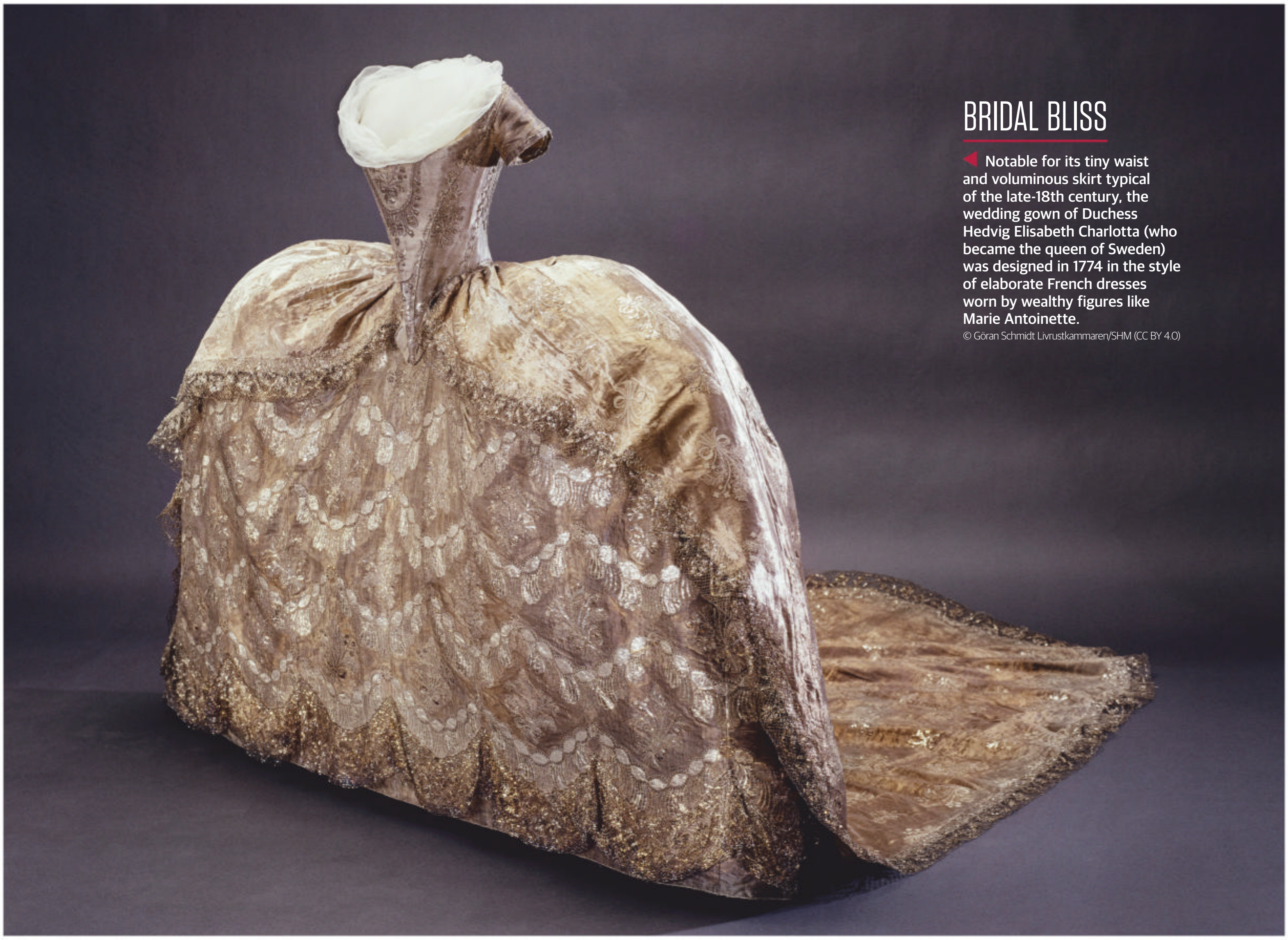
MARIE ANTOINETTE: FASHION ICON

A new exhibition explores the enduring style of the infamous 18th-century French queen

Marie Antoinette, the deposed queen of France, was executed by guillotine at Place de la Révolution in Paris on 16 October 1793. Prior to the downfall of the monarchy during the French Revolution, she had enjoyed a life of unfettered glamour and luxury. But her expensive tastes drew intense criticism from the long-suffering French and ultimately contributed to her demise nine months after her husband King Louis XVI was beheaded. Now, a glitzy new exhibition at London's Victoria & Albert Museum explores the influence of Marie Antoinette on style and fashion trends over the last 250 years.

The United Kingdom's first exhibition on the French queen, sponsored by luxury shoe designer Manolo Blahnik, Marie Antoinette Style brings together 250 objects from her own possessions and from the collections of designers who have been inspired by her. Some of the items include pieces from the Palace of Versailles that have never before been on display outside of France.

Presented chronologically, the exhibition will take visitors on a journey through the centuries to understand Marie's timeless appeal and how, in the words of curator Sarah Grant, the "rare combination of glamour, spectacle and tragedy she presents remains as intoxicating today as it was in the 18th century."



BRIDAL BLISS

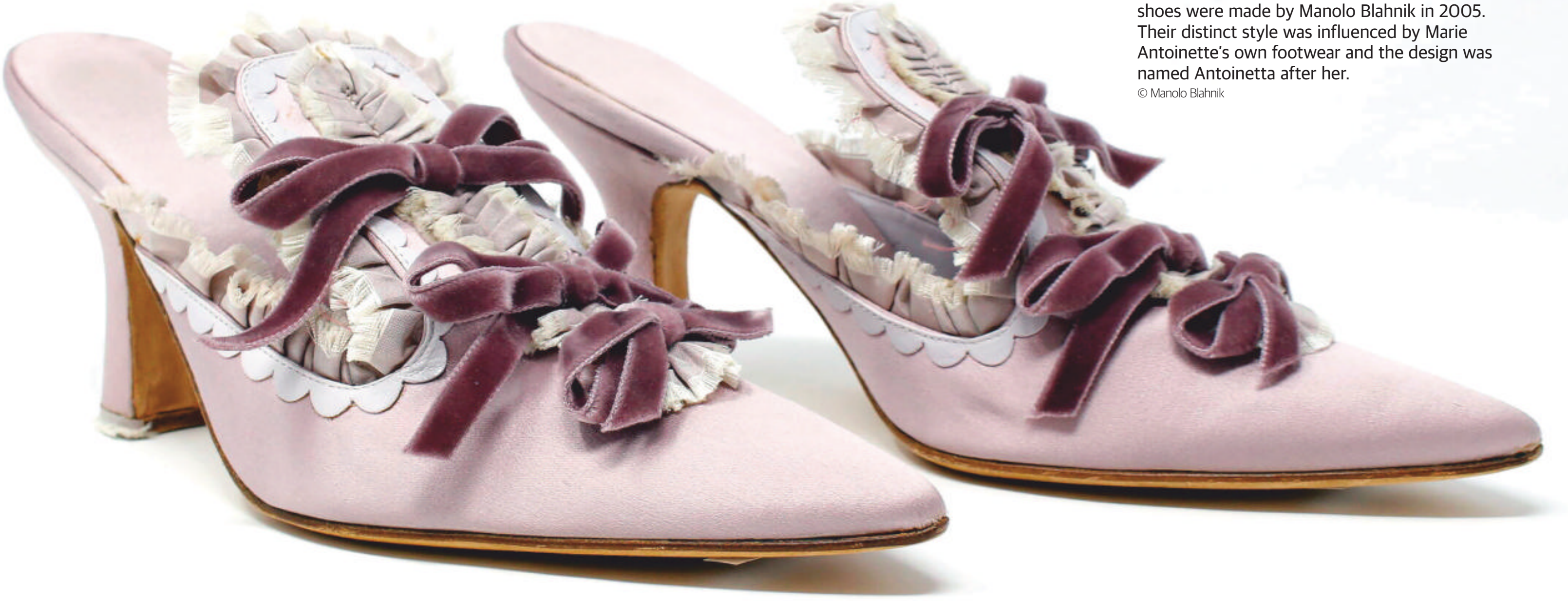
◀ Notable for its tiny waist and voluminous skirt typical of the late-18th century, the wedding gown of Duchess Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta (who became the queen of Sweden) was designed in 1774 in the style of elaborate French dresses worn by wealthy figures like Marie Antoinette.

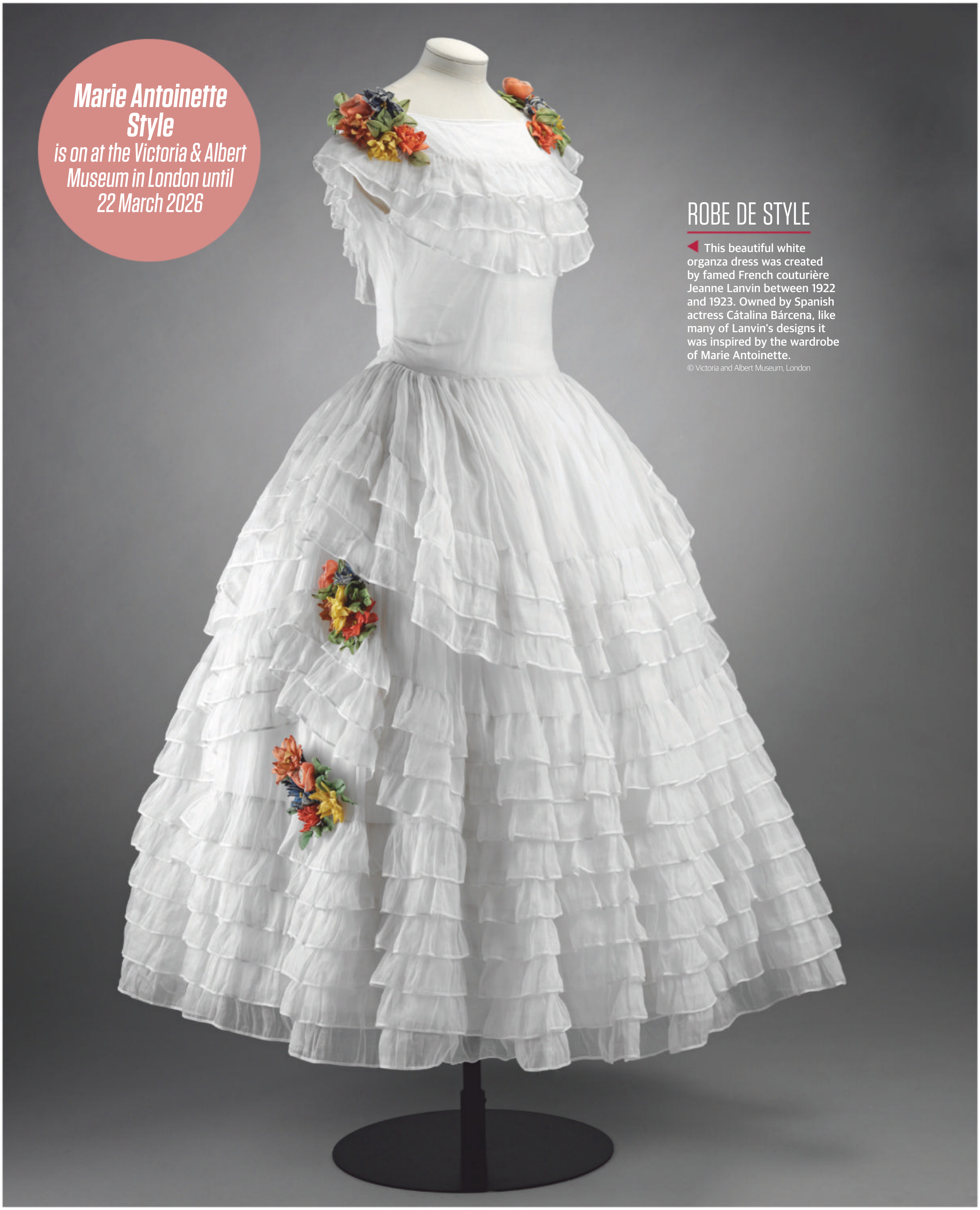
© Göran Schmidt Livrustkammaren/SHM (CC BY 4.0)

CONTEMPORARY COUTURE

▼ One of a number of modern fashion items on display in the exhibition, these shoes were made by Manolo Blahnik in 2005. Their distinct style was influenced by Marie Antoinette's own footwear and the design was named Antoinetta after her.

© Manolo Blahnik



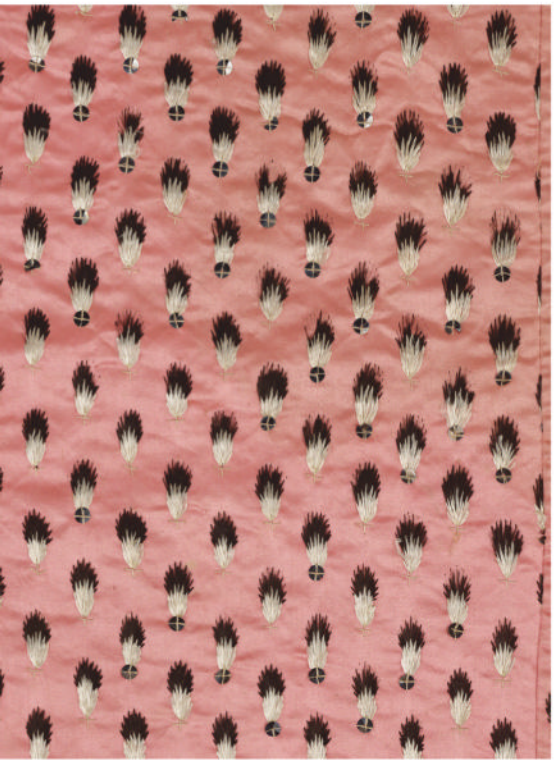


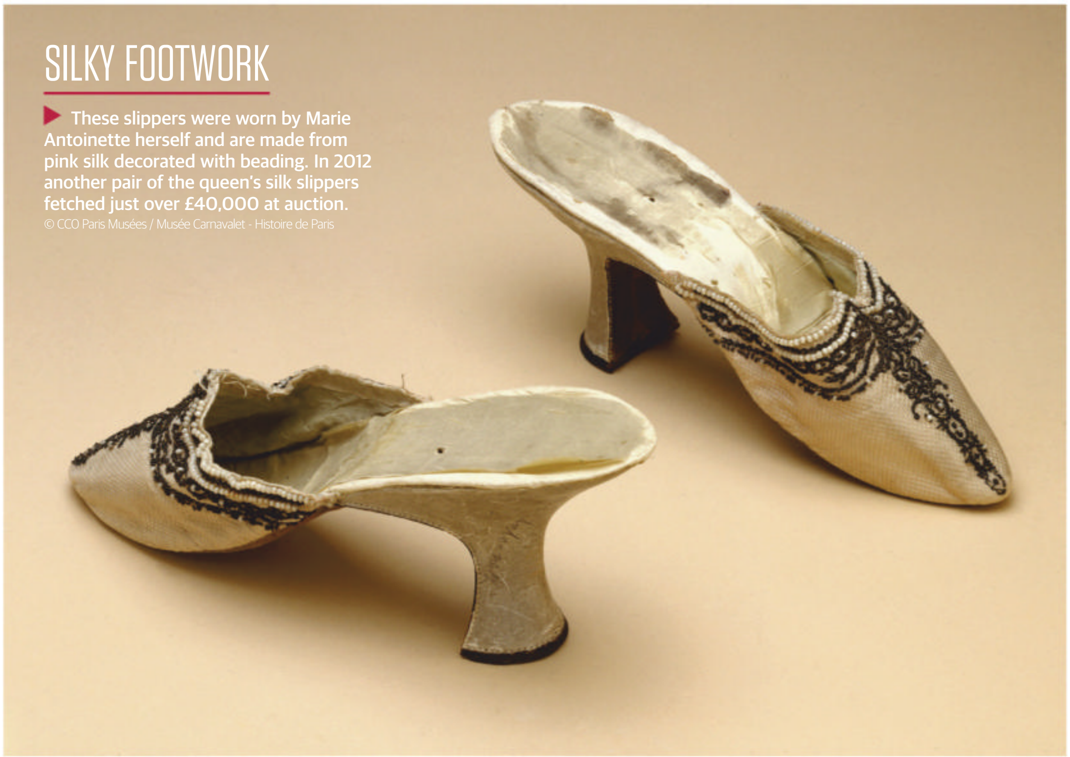
Marie Antoinette Style
is on at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London until 22 March 2026

ROBE DE STYLE

◀ This beautiful white organza dress was created by famed French couturière Jeanne Lanvin between 1922 and 1923. Owned by Spanish actress Cátalina Bárcena, like many of Lanvin's designs it was inspired by the wardrobe of Marie Antoinette.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London





SILKY FOOTWORK

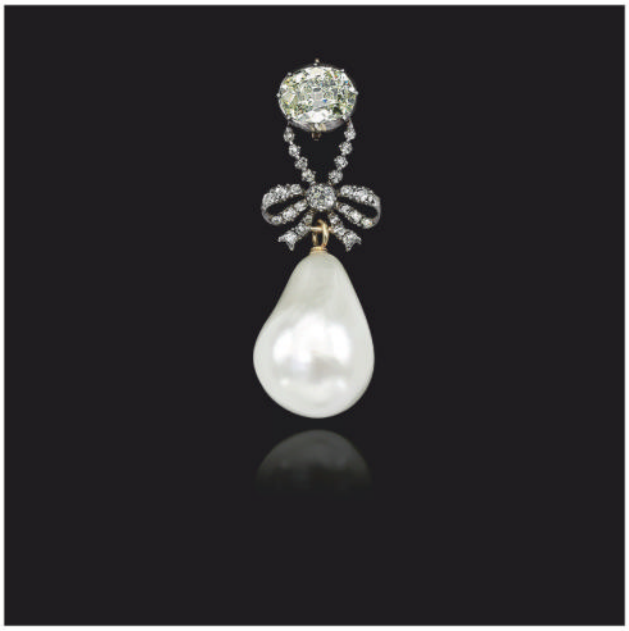
These slippers were worn by Marie Antoinette herself and are made from pink silk decorated with beading. In 2012 another pair of the queen's silk slippers fetched just over £40,000 at auction.

© CCO Paris Musées / Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris

FASHION FRAGMENT

A rare piece of fabric, this boldly patterned material once made up part of a court gown that belonged to Marie Antoinette. The fragment is just one of the items in the exhibition that belonged to the French queen.

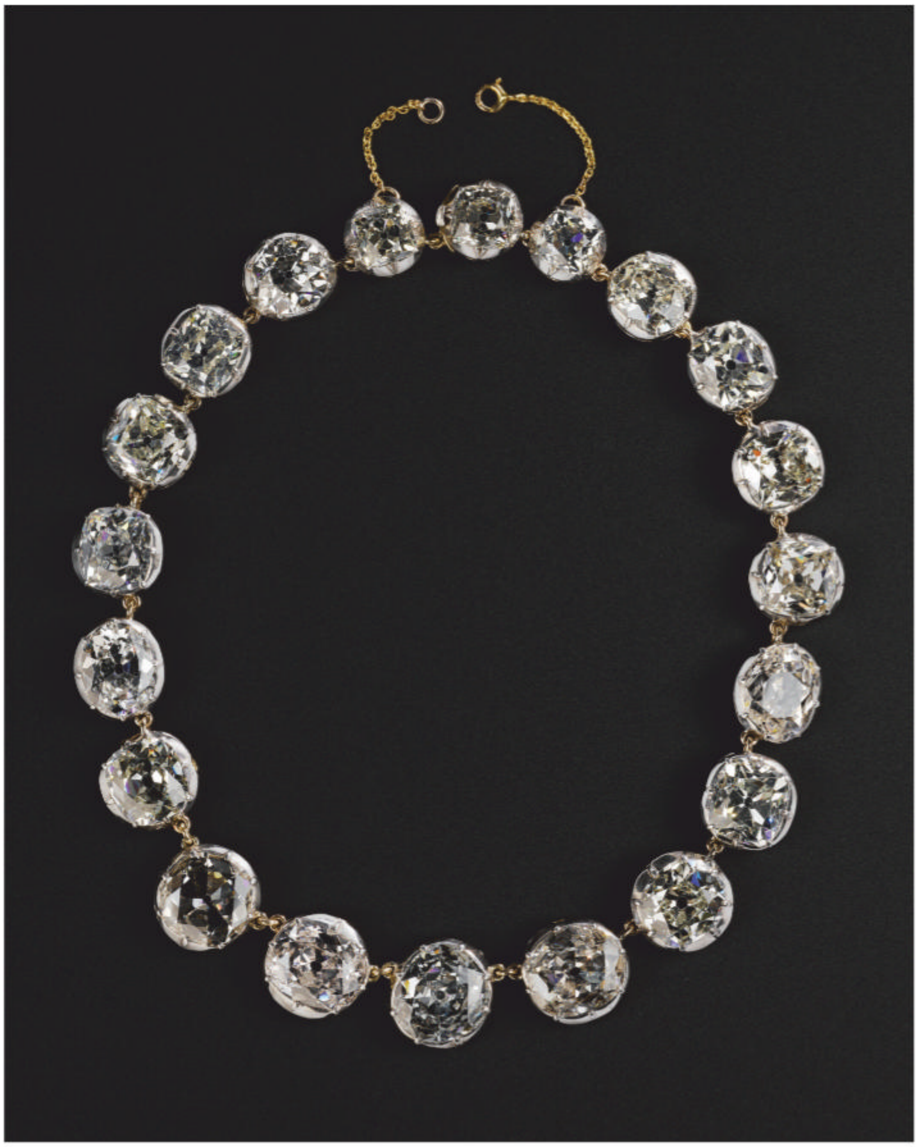
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



PEARL PENDANT

This pearl and diamond pendant is believed to have been among the jewellery hastily packed away by Marie Antoinette and King Louis XVI as they planned their escape from French revolutionaries in 1791.

© Sotheby's / Bridgeman Images



DODGY DIAMONDS?

The Sutherland diamonds that make up this necklace have traditionally been linked to the French queen. It's alleged that the diamonds were originally part of the necklace at the centre of a notorious jewellery scam of 1784-85 which implicated Marie Antoinette and tarnished her reputation with the public.

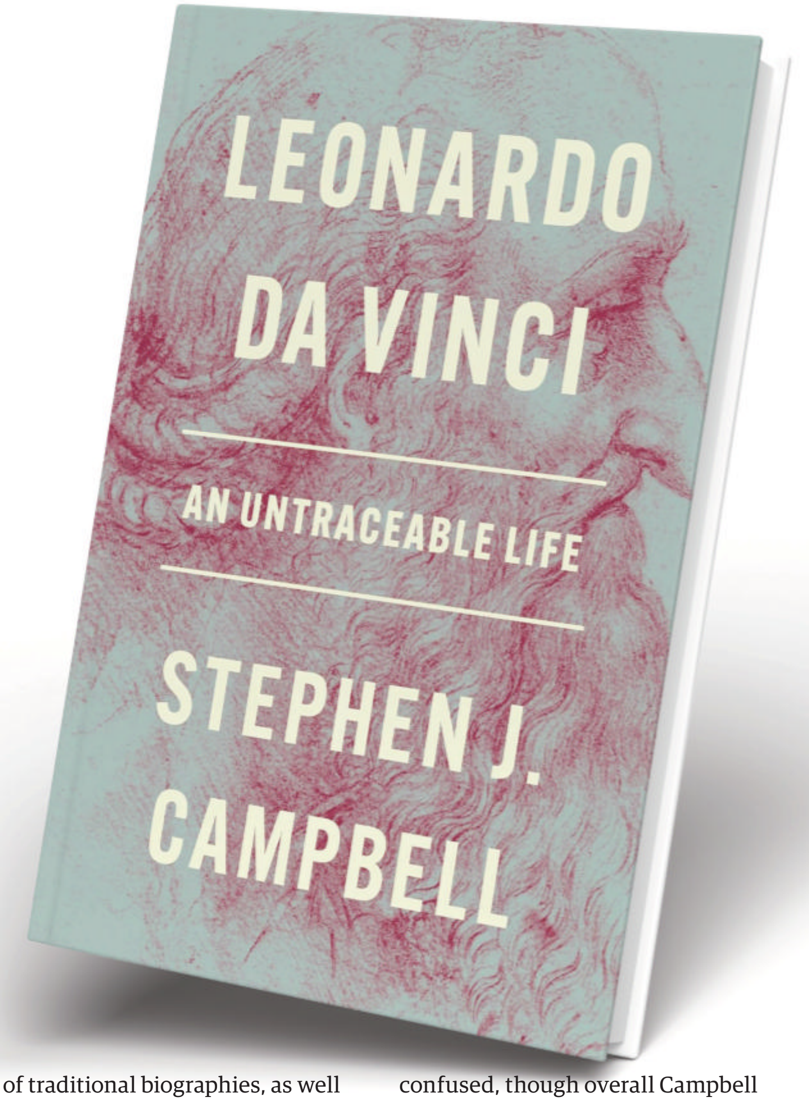
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Reviews by Emily Stanisforth, Jonathan Gordon, Callum McKelvie

LEONARDO DA VINCI
AN UNTRACEABLE LIFE

Deconstructing the mysterious life and work of the great Renaissance polymath

Author: Stephen J Campbell
Publisher: Princeton University Press
Price: £30
Released: Out now

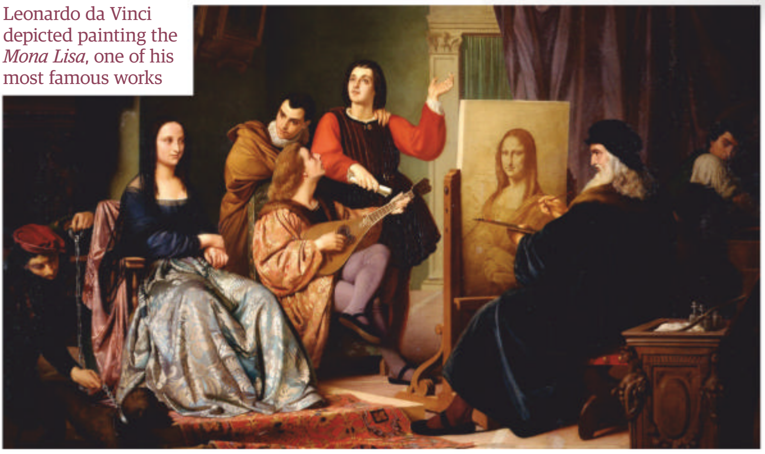


Of all the Renaissance masters, Leonardo da Vinci is the most famous. As the artist behind such works as the *Mona Lisa* and *The Last Supper*, and as an inventor and mathematician, his life has been the subject of countless biographies. In these studies, Da Vinci has become well known as an engaging, charismatic and curious but solitary visionary who strived for perfection in every aspect of his varied work. But is that true? What do we really know about the personality and demeanour of Da Vinci?

According to Stephen J Campbell, the answer to these questions is not much at all. His new book *Leonardo da Vinci: An Untraceable Life* addresses the fact that the real information we have about the Renaissance artist is sparse despite the vast number of documents left behind by Da Vinci himself. As for the work of Da Vinci we celebrate today, much of it is not signed by the artist and, according to Campbell, the contemporary accounts of his work "often worryingly differ from the surviving works that we connect them to." The author says historians and scholars have spent 500 years filling in the gaps of Da Vinci's life, creating and perpetuating a myth of who he really was.

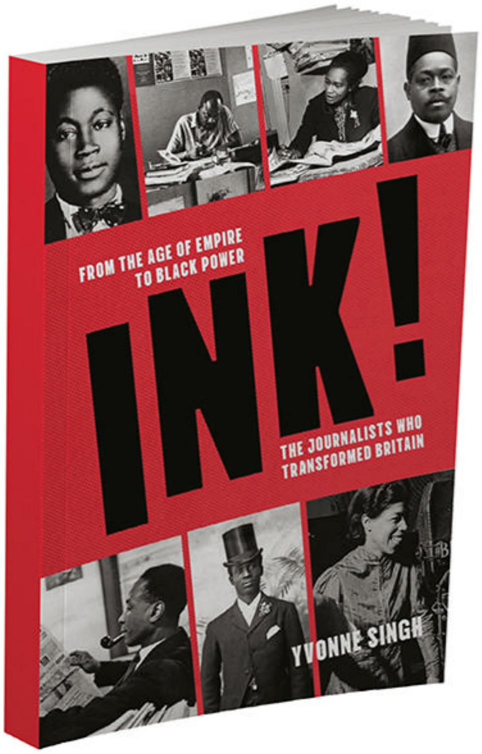
As the Henry and Elizabeth Wiesenfeld Professor of the Department of History of Art at John Hopkins University, Campbell acknowledges that as an art historian he is "invested" in what research in his field can tell us about the legacy of Da Vinci. However, his book aims to highlight the issues with biographical studies of a man whom we want so badly to understand but will likely not be able to due to lack of information.

Leonardo da Vinci: An Untraceable Life is an engaging, well-researched and expertly put together book that educates readers about Renaissance art's workshop culture, premodern ideas of selfhood and the pitfalls of traditional biographies, as well as the murky facts about Da Vinci himself. The inclusion of a number of beautiful images also helps us fully appreciate the stunning Renaissance works referred to throughout the book.


Leonardo da Vinci depicted painting the *Mona Lisa*, one of his most famous works

© Getty Images

While Campbell successfully dismantles many of the 'facts' of Da Vinci's life, offering his own opinions of the evidence available, readers may well be left struggling to paint a picture of who the artist really was. At times, the focus of the book feels disjointed and a little confused, though overall Campbell achieves what he set out to do. As stressed throughout the work, this is an "anti-biography" that suggests Da Vinci's life would be better understood as an amalgamation of his interactions with the people and social environment in which he lived, the influence of that world on his life and work, and its legacy as it has been responded to over time. In reading this book, it becomes clear that sometimes we may just have to embrace the idea of not knowing. ***ES***


FROM THE AGE OF EMPIRE TO BLACK POWER
INK!
THE JOURNALISTS WHO TRANSFORMED BRITAIN
YVONNE SINGH

INK! FROM THE AGE OF EMPIRE TO BLACK POWER, THE JOURNALISTS WHO TRANSFORMED BRITAIN

Bringing seven fascinating voices back into the limelight

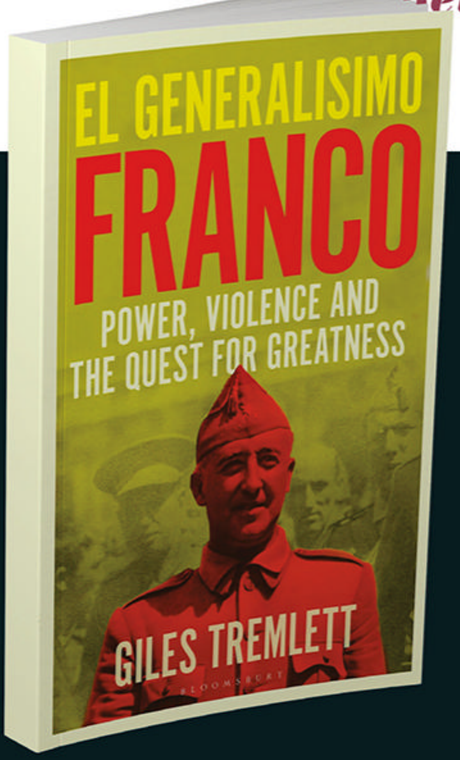
Author: Yvonne Singh
Publisher: The History Press
Price: £22
Released: Out now

Hoping to shine a light on the corners of British history that have frequently been ignored, Yvonne Singh's *Ink!* introduces us to a collection of Black writers who chronicled their experiences. It looks at the journalists who had to work on the fringes because they were not welcome in the newsrooms and on the pages of mainstream newspapers. And being on the fringes also meant they lived particularly interesting lives, as this book neatly illustrates.

The writers in question are Samuel Jules Celestine Edwards, Dusé Mohamed Ali, Claude McKay, George Padmore, Una Marson, Claudia Jones and Darcus Howe, whose careers span from the peak of empire to the 1980s. Singh begins with Edwards, one of Britain's first Black editors, who came to the country as a stowaway in the late 19th century and became the founder of two publications charting the experience of Black Britons.

Singh's writing is wonderfully evocative and colourful, offering really engaging scenes as she illustrates the key events of her subjects' lives. It can sometimes feel like a lot coming at you, but once you get into the rhythm of her style it flows really nicely.

This is by no means a dry academic text. There is not only passion for the subject matter in *Ink!* but also a palpable sense of the author's personal attachment to these figures and the strong sense of relation in profession and experience she feels. It's a recipe that gives the book a great deal of momentum and energy. ***JG***



EL GENERALISIMO

A new biography explores the life of Francisco Franco – the dictator who ruled Spain for 39 years

Author: Giles Tremlett
Publisher: Bloomsbury
Price: £30
Released: Out now

From 1936 to 1975, fascist dictator Francisco Franco ruled Spain with an iron fist. What was unique about his regime was that it outlived its European contemporaries, with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy both falling during the Second World War. Only António de Oliveira Salazar's regime in Portugal came close, collapsing four years after his death in 1968. So what was Franco, the old warrior who presided over his country for so long, really like? In his latest work, Giles Tremlett attempts to answer this question.

His book is a comprehensive biography that in many ways feels definitive. Tremlett spends the first 200 pages or so covering Franco's life up to and including the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), with the subsequent 200 pages on the years afterwards. At the heart of Tremlett's perspective is Franco's pride and how this was the dictator's primary motivator.

Franco is an intriguing figure, perhaps less remembered outside of Spain than Adolf Hitler or Benito Mussolini, but this makes him an interesting prospect for a biography. For example, how many casual readers are aware of Franco's all-consuming loathing for Freemasonry? Or of his difficult relationship with his father, whose frequent affairs he detested? Tremlett uses these personal details as colours with which to paint a more detailed picture of the man.

El Generalísimo is a superb biography, of interest to both those well versed in the history of fascist Spain and those unfamiliar with Franco and his bitter legacy. ***CM***

GUILLERMO DEL TORO
Frankenstein
OSCAR ISAAC
JACOB ELORDI
MIA GOTH
CHRISTOPH WALTZ
IN SELECT THEATERS OCTOBER 17
NETFLIX | NOVEMBER 7

FRANKENSTEIN

A faithful and beguiling retelling of the original science fiction epic

Director: Guillermo del Toro
Cast: Oscar Isaac, Jacob Elordi, Mia Goth
Streaming: Netflix
Released: Out now

Much has been made of Guillermo del Toro's interpretation of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* being the most faithful adaptation of the original 19th-century work to date. It turns out that in this instance the consensus is correct, although it remains very much an adaptation, making many amendments and contractions to the original work. Where Del Toro is most faithful is in the themes he chooses to explore in his film and in the framing devices of the story.

If you're unfamiliar with the director's previous works, there has been a recurring interest in portraying sympathetic 'monsters' in his films, from a giant plant-being in *Hellboy II* to the amphibious humanoid in *The Shape Of Water*. It's no surprise, then, that adapting *Frankenstein* has been a passion project for the Mexican director for much of his career. Here he can pour all of the empathy and longing into his creation that he has been trying to capture previously.

The result is a particularly moving depiction of the Creature, as the film refers to Jacob Elordi's constructed man. Shelley describes the monster as an amalgamation of beautiful but ill-fitting facial features and that's very much what we see on screen. Elordi gives a very physical and empathetic performance as he goes from infantile and timid giant to melancholic and rageful 'adult'. As in the book, that journey is one full of false starts and painful betrayals as he seeks understanding and friendship, but frequently encounters only fear and hatred, not least from his creator.

Oscar Isaac's Victor Frankenstein is equally well illustrated, capturing the bravado and arrogance of the novel's protagonist as well as his almost pitiful descent into guilt and ill-health. The early portion of the film is where we get some of the most interesting insights as scientific discovery and social norms clash. There are hints of this in the novel, but Del Toro has fully embraced this pivot-point of history. Some of the details are anachronistic for the mid-1850s, but fully capture the Gothic grandeur one would hope and expect to see in such a tale.

As always with Del Toro's work, the set design and world-building is excellent. This is a director who thrives equally in the sumptuous and the grisly. While the driving force of the film is the character studies of Frankenstein and his creation, the sets are eye-poppingly gorgeous. There's a fair amount of classic Gothic horror styling to some of it, reminiscent of (but more colourful than) the recent *Nosferatu* or *Bram Stoker's Dracula* by Francis Ford Coppola. Some of the action and surgery sequences are definitely not for the squeamish either as the body details are gruesomely articulated. The only small bumps we had in watching this film came in some of the writing, with some ideas hammered a little too heavily, but this was a limited annoyance in an otherwise captivating piece of work. ***JG***

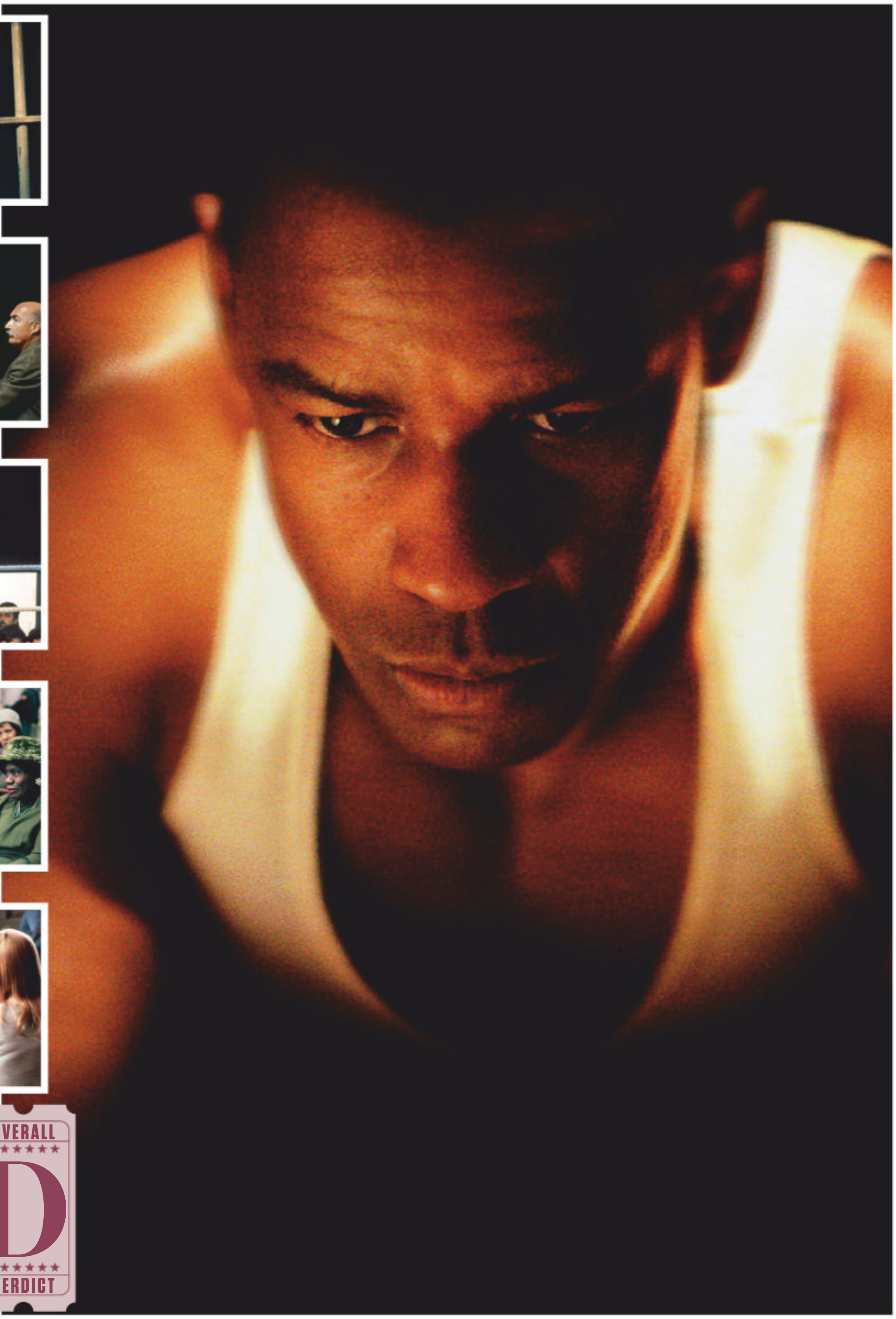
© Alamy

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

THE HURRICANE

Director: Norman Jewison **Starring:** Denzel Washington, Deborah Kara Unger, Liev Schreiber **Country:** USA **Year:** 1999

Does this story of unjust incarceration stick to the evidence?



01 *The Hurricane* tells the story of Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter (Washington), a boxer wrongfully convicted of a triple homicide and his 19-year fight for justice. These key facts are all true but the film ignores elements of Carter's real life that would cast him in a bad light.

02 Carter is in and out of prison from a young age thanks to the constant pursuit and harassment of Sergeant Della Pesca. But Carter faced court martial trials and was discharged from the army, and was convicted for muggings – all events not shown in the film.

03 As an example of the prejudice Carter faced, his 1964 bout against Joey Giardello ends in defeat thanks to racist judges. In reality Carter himself has acknowledged the decision was a fair one and Giardello sued the filmmakers for their depiction of events.

04 Carter pleads with his wife Mae Thelma to divorce him so the authorities can take nothing more from him. But according to Mae Thelma, she divorced him due to his infidelities, as he was having affairs with supporters of his fight for freedom.

05 Things turn around thanks to Lesra Martin, a young man inspired by Carter's autobiography. With the support of his guardians in a Canadian commune, they set about trying to appeal Carter's case. But this ignores the vital evidence-gathering of his defence lawyers.

D

HISTORY

Softens Carter but the truth makes him no less deserving of justice.

C

HOLLYWOOD

A by-the-numbers biopic that has its moving moments.

OVERALL

D

VERDICT

All images: © Alamy

RECIPE

LEMON SYLLABUB

ENGLAND, 16-19TH CENTURY

Dinners and social gatherings are matters of great importance in the lives of Jane Austen's characters, but sometimes the specifics of what they're eating and drinking aren't always clear. There are a few exceptions, of course, such as Mr Bingley's white soup in *Pride And Prejudice* or the strawberries in *Emma*. There are also plenty of references to food in how Austen portrays events and people, such as in one of her earliest works, *Lesley Castle*, where someone is described as being "as White as a Whipt syllabub".

Syllabub is somewhere between dessert and a drink made with cream, often with a citrus of some kind, and we know from Austen's personal letters that it was something she enjoyed. The recipe was originally very basic, using cream and something like sherry as the only important ingredients. The key was for it to be frothy, which led some people to deliver milk into a glass directly from a cow's udder! Thankfully today we have the benefit of electric whisks and whipping cream to make things a little simpler when recreating this recipe.

Serves: 6 **Prep time:** 15 mins
Cooking time: 30 mins

- **285ml whipping cream**
- **50g caster sugar**
- **50ml white wine**
- **¼tsp ground nutmeg**
- **Zest and juice of half a lemon**
- **Thinly sliced lemon peel to serve**

01 In a bowl, using a whisk or hand mixer, whip the cream and sugar together under it forms soft peaks. For best results it can help to use a chilled glass bowl for this step.

02 Gently stir in the white wine, nutmeg, lemon zest and juice. Continue to whisk to keep the mixture's fluffy consistency as best as possible.

03 Cover and chill the mixture, allowing all of the sugar to dissolve and flavours to meld, for at least 30 minutes.

04 Pour or spoon the mixture into chilled glasses and top with the slices of lemon peel as a garnish.

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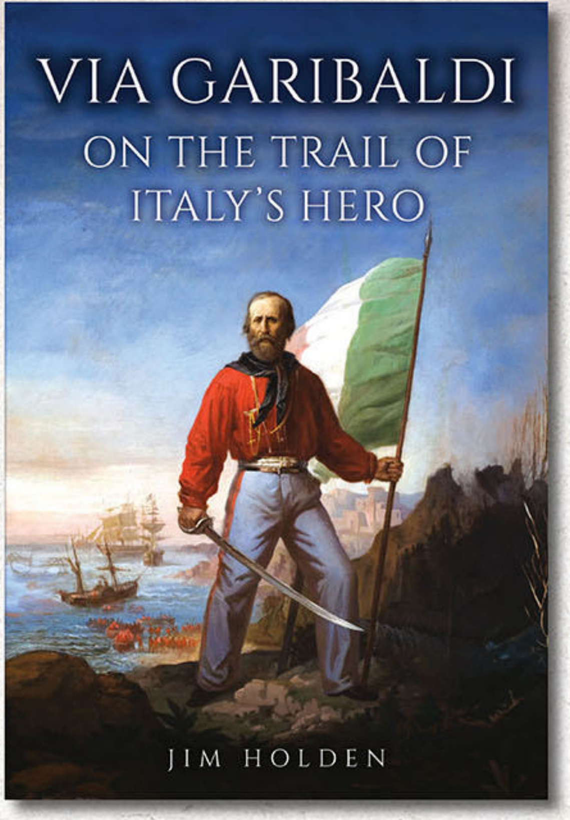
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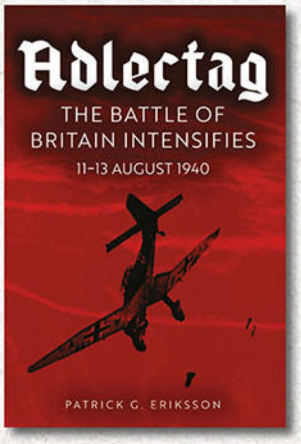
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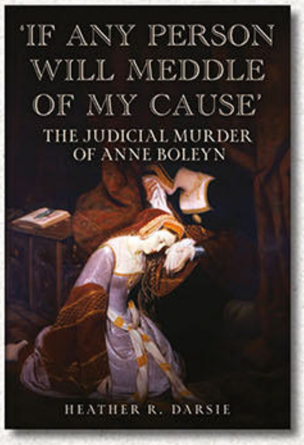
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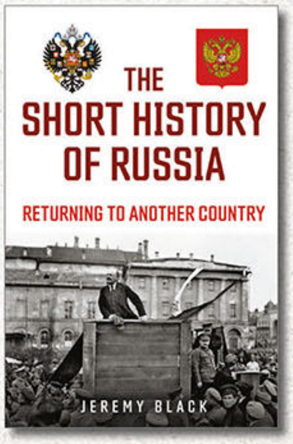
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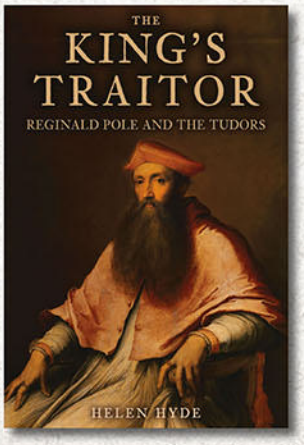
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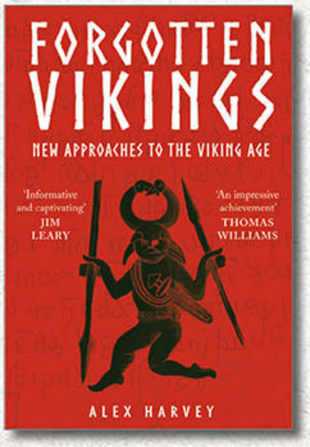
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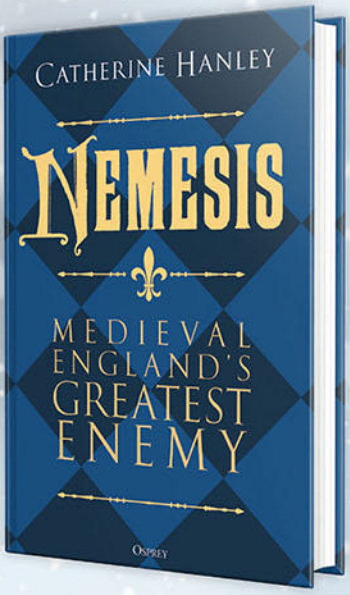
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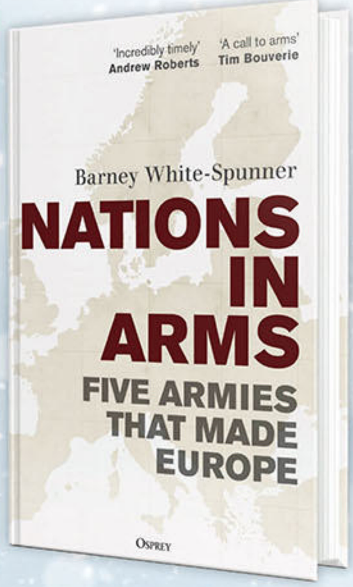
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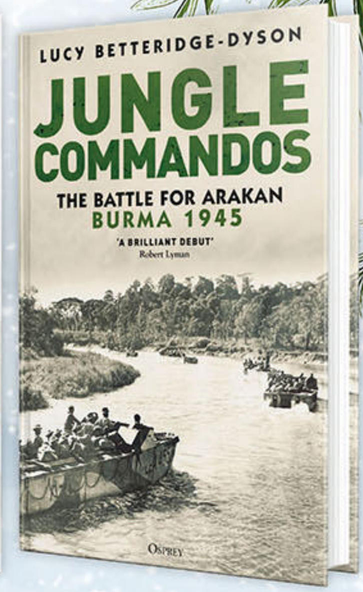
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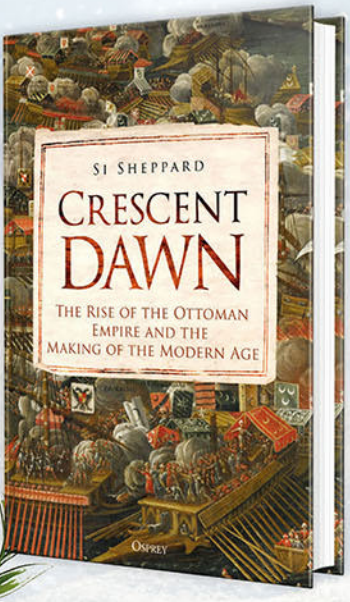
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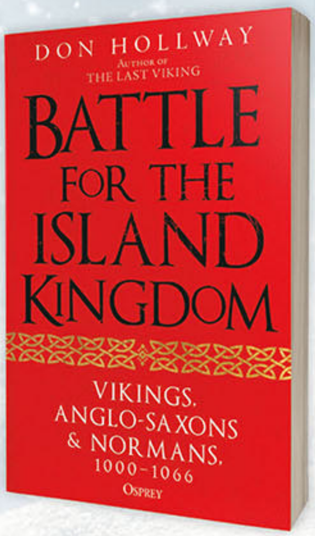
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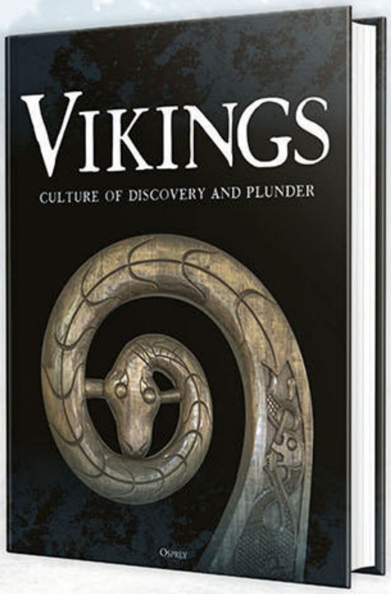
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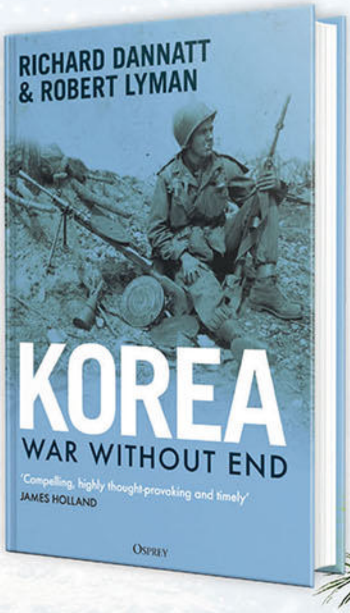
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